

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

After all the time I put into the Lessons from Genesis and Leviticus, I have come away with a deeper appreciation for the how and why of pursuing holiness out of a faith-driven obedience to the Only Wise God...Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

After the long hours and sometimes exhausting work in Lessons from Isaiah and Revelations I have learned to hear and see God in a way that is most contemporary and most edifying for the times in which we live. I put these two great books of the Bible together in this because, while they are different genres, they both definitely reveal the Godhead in a way that is most necessary for our survival, our growth in grace and our witness in 21<sup>st</sup> Century America.

All of that is to say, that I am looking forward to the Minor Prophets for they will do the same thing as the Isaiah and Revelation studies...reveal the God who is so that we come away with understanding our God more, enabling us to be less hesitant in trusting Him. I am in the process of journibling through these books for the second time and without commentaries have mined what I believe to be is the basics of the lessons that can be learned from these letters. It would take a lifetime...and should take a lifetime to learn all the lessons that God has revealed, if it is even possible for the mind of man.

The Prophets in general remind me that God has been, is and will be always working in the world up until Christ returns. God has not left His creation to fend for itself. In fact, no one can read the Prophets and come away with any other conclusion than God is at work in His people and in the nations bringing to Himself all who are His from every nation tongue and tribe.

Now to the basics: It is obvious by even a cursory observation of the Prophets that in times of spiritual and moral repression and decay, God raised up for Himself and for His people men (prophets) in whose mouth He placed His Word in an effort to turn His people back to Him in repentance. The prophets emphasized God...Elohim, Yahweh... who is the sole and true God who created the world and the one whom all men are commanded to worship. Their main purpose was to be speakers of or for God. The title denoted that the words they spoke are not productions of their own but come from a higher source and they are required to give these words just as they are given. While they are times they seem to "predict" it is more proper to say that their work as a whole was to proclaim what they were told rather than to predict what was to come. Prophesying was speaking back the Word God had given to them.

The Minor Prophets as they are called, because of their size in words not content, were men who were called to service from the 8<sup>th</sup> Cent. B.C. through to the 5<sup>th</sup> Cent. B.C. These great books speak clearly to present sins and call for present action while clearly speaking to the struggles of the times. We find that no matter the age sinful man doesn't change a whole lot. We have different "toys" to sin with but we still seek after the same sins in principle...revealing just how in need we are for this same God.

Of all the attributes of God spoken of in the Minor Prophets I found (and then later discovered that my discovery wasn't my own) that these 12 writers focus mostly on 3 of God's attributes more than any others: a.) God's sovereignty which seems to be the driver of all the rest, b.) God's holiness- you can't have a book calling people to repentance without talking extensively about God's holiness and the holiness He calls His people to, a holiness that is based in His holiness, and lastly; c), God's love which obviously includes His justice...for He can't be

loving...truly loving unless He is also just...upholding His standard to His own glory. A true understanding of these is necessary today as well.

The Books in canonical order are:

Ezra- 5<sup>th</sup> Century priest after the exile  
Nehemiah- 5<sup>th</sup> Century Governor after the exile  
Hosea- 8<sup>th</sup> Cent. Prophet (750 -730 or so)  
Joel- 6<sup>th</sup> Cent. Prophet (520-500 or so)  
Amos- 8<sup>th</sup> Cent. Prophet (similar to Hosea)  
Obadiah- 6<sup>th</sup> Cent. Prophet (550's)  
Jonah- 9<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> Cent. Prophet (probably early 8<sup>th</sup> Cent. 790's)  
Micah- 8<sup>th</sup> Cent. Prophet (750-686 somewhere in there)  
Nahum- 7<sup>th</sup> Cent. Prophet (660-650)  
Habakkuk- 7<sup>th</sup> Cent. Prophet (609-598)  
Zephaniah- 7<sup>th</sup> Cent. Prophet- (640-615 or so)  
Haggai- 6<sup>th</sup> Cent. Prophet (520- 5 or 6 months))  
Zechariah- 6<sup>th</sup> Cent. Prophet (along with Haggai)  
Malachi- 5<sup>th</sup> Cent. Prophet (483-433 or so)

I will be including Ezra and Nehemiah in our study just before Malachi since this is where they are most pertinent for our study rather than beginning with them in canonical order. I will include them not because they are prophets in the usual sense but because they affirm and confirm what the prophets spoke of during this time of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC.

I think studying the prophets are important for the Christian to see what was going on then but also how contemporary the warnings, challenges and blessings are for today. I've heard many evangelicals suggest, in one way or another at various levels of theological sophistication, that the Old Testament just isn't relevant to us any longer because all of that was done away with by Christ. This is a tragic misreading of the Scriptures.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told His listeners, ***"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets...but to fulfill them."*** Jesus affirms that the God of the Old Testament is our God still, that the Creator of the world and the giver of the law is our loving Father who is both just and the justifier of the ungodly. Scripture...all Scripture, has ultimate relevance, from the Old Testament to the New Testament...yesterday, today and tomorrow. The whole Bible is relevant to a Christian world and life view.

As usual much of these studies will come from my own personal study through these books over the years but also other works such as:

**Man Overboard: the Story of Jonah**, by Sinclair Ferguson

**The Minor Prophets**, by James Montgomery Boice

**The Micah Mandate**, by George Grant

**A Commentary on The Minor Prophets**, by Homer Hailey

Along with other resources that will be referenced along the way.

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
October 3, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Introduction

1. Do you read the OT much? **The average Christian does not.** When you read the OT, how have you encountered the God of Israel?
  - a. **The God who created all that is?**
  - b. **The God who inundated the whole world with a flood because of the sins of men?**
  - c. **The God who controlled the elements bringing actual plagues on Egypt?**
  - d. **The God who opened up the earth and swallowed many of the Jews at the rebellion against Moses?**
  - e. **The God of the Exile?**
2. The Prophets in general remind me that God has been, is and will be always working in the world up until Christ returns. God has not left His creation to fend for itself. In fact, no one can read the Prophets and come away with any other conclusion than God is at work in His people and in the nations bringing to Himself all who are His from every nation tongue and tribe.
3. It is obvious by even a cursory observation of the Prophets that in times of spiritual and moral repression and decay, God raised up for Himself and for His people men (prophets) in whose mouth He placed His Word in an effort to turn His people back to Him in repentance.
4. The Minor Prophets as they are called, because of their size in words not content, were men who were called to service from the 9th Cent. B.C. through to the 5th Cent. B.C. These great books speak clearly to present sins and call for present action while clearly speaking to the struggles of the times. We find that no matter the age sinful man doesn't change a whole lot. We have different "toys" to sin with but we still seek after the same sins in principle...revealing just how in need we are for this same God.
5. Look at Luke 24:44-48 a moment. What does this passage tell us?
  - a. **That we are to study all these books...OT...because they all look forward to Christ.**
  - b. **Jesus Himself says that all of these books are about Him and the redemption He came to secure for His own, and for the glory of His Father.**
6. Despite their name, the "Minor" Prophets hit us in ways that we are not so comfortable with sometimes. These final twelve books of the Old Testament have strange names and often use poetic language to introduce people and stories that are literally thousands of years old. But when we read the Minor Prophets to know Jesus better, and enjoy Him more deeply, we will see His glory afresh in at least six ways.

- a. We will discover the character of Christ.
  - (1) **God reveals Himself as a jealous husband whose people have committed adultery with other gods (Hosea 1-3). Jesus is the Bridegroom of His redeemed people, the church Mark 2:19-20; Ephesians 5:22-33.**
  - (2) **God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding steadfast love, but will not clear the guilty (Jonah 4:2; Nahum 1:2-3). Jesus was the fullest embodiment of grace and truth (John 1: 16-18) while at the same time being the righteous Judge who will execute God's wrath (Revelation 19:11-21).**
- b. We will uncover the horror of the sin for which Jesus died.
  - (1) **Often in graphic detail, the Minor Prophets describe the many different ways sin manifests itself, such as spiritual adultery, (Hosea 2:1-13), idolatry (Hosea 4:10-19), mistreating others (Amos 1:2-2:16; Micah 2:1-3:12), prejudice (Jonah 1:1-6; 4:1-11), and impurity (Malachi 1:6-14).**
  - (2) **We see the same sins in the world today and in our own hearts (Romans 1:18-3:19; Ephesians 2:1-3), exposing our need for Jesus.**
- c. We will anticipate a real day when Jesus will judge the world.
  - (1) **We see the awful judgment that Jesus bears on the cross for his people. The Minor Prophets repeatedly refer to the coming Day of the Lord, when God will execute judgment on his enemies (Joel 1:2-2:11; Obadiah 1-16; Zephaniah 1:2-18).**
  - (2) **The judgment threatened for Israel and the surrounding nations anticipates the final judgment on all humanity on the last day Acts 17:30-31. It is this judgment for the sin of his people that Jesus took upon himself at the cross Matthew 27:32-56.**
- d. We will recognize the King of kings.
  - (1) **We will see descriptions of the righteous king that Jesus fulfills. Unlike the unfaithful kings who ruled over Israel and Judah, God promises a king from David's line who will establish peace and rule over God's people as a shepherd (Micah 5:2-5). His reign will extend to all nations and transform creation itself (Amos 9:11-15; Zechariah 9:9; 14:9).**
  - (2) **As the true son of David (Matthew 1:1), Jesus has become our peace (Ephesians 2:14) and rules over his people as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-18). He sits at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 1:1-13), awaiting the day when he will transform creation (Revelation 21-22).**
- e. We will appreciate the certainty and cost of our salvation.
  - (1) **We will see the sure and certain promises of the salvation that Jesus accomplishes. Because God is compassionate, He promises He will tread our iniquities underfoot and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:18-20).**
  - (2) **As "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29, 35-36), Jesus "bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24).**

- f. And we will be reminded that we have Jesus's Spirit living in us.  
**(1) We see the wonderful promises of the Spirit that Jesus pours out on His people. As part of redeeming His people, God promises to pour out His Spirit on all His people, regardless of their sex or social status (Joel 2:28-32).**  
**(2) As the risen and exalted Lord, Jesus pours out the Spirit on His people to empower us to live holy lives and bear witness to Him (Acts 2:1-41).**

7. Of all the attributes of God spoken of in the Minor Prophets I found (and then later discovered that my discovery wasn't my own) that these 12 writers focus mostly on 3 of God's attributes more than any others:
- a. God's sovereignty which seems to be the driver of all the rest.
  - b. God's holiness- you can't have a book calling people to repentance without talking extensively about God's holiness and the holiness He calls His people to, a holiness that is based in His holiness.
  - c. God's love which obviously includes His justice...for He can't be loving...truly loving unless He is also just...upholding His standard to His own glory. A true understanding of these is necessary today as well.
8. We will look at the books in chronological order not canonical as they are found in your Bibles:
- a. Jonah- 9th or 8th Cent. Prophet (probably early 8th Cent. 790's)- Northern Kingdom
  - b. Hosea- 8th Cent. Prophet (750 -730 or so)-prophet to the Northern Kingdom
  - c. Amos- 8th Cent. Prophet (similar to Hosea)- Northern Kingdom
  - d. Micah- 8th Cent. Prophet (750-686 somewhere in there)- Judah
    - (1) All of these seem to have been contemporaries of Isaiah
  - e. Nahum- 7th Cent. Prophet (660-650)- Judah
  - f. Zephaniah- 7th Cent. Prophet- (640-615 or so)- Judah
  - g. Habakkuk- 7th Cent. Prophet (609-598)- Judah
    - (1) These 7<sup>th</sup> Century dates are approximates for they came and went all about the same time...or there was crossover.
    - (2) During the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel and possibly king Josiah
  - h. Joel- 6th Cent. Prophet (520-500 or so)- Northern Kingdom
  - i. Obadiah- 6th Cent. Prophet (550's)- Judah
  - j. Haggai- 6th Cent. Prophet (520-5 or 6 months)- prophet of the restoration
  - k. Zechariah- 6th Cent. Prophet (along with Haggai )- prophet of the restoration
    - (1) Ezra- 5th Century priest after the exile
    - (2) Nehemiah- 5th Century Governor after the exile.
      - I will be including Ezra and Nehemiah in our study just before Malachi since this is where they are most pertinent for our study rather than beginning with them in canonical order
      - I include these not because they are prophets in the usual sense but because they affirm and confirm what the prophets spoke of during this time of the 6th and 5th Century BC.
      - These 2 books are one book in the Hebrew Scriptures...considered to be part of the historical section of the OT.
  - l. Malachi- 5th Cent. Prophet (483-433 or so )- prophet of the restoration

9. Why do you suppose the books are not in chronological order?
10. Let's look a moment at the role of the prophet and then next week we will get into the text of the book. How would you define a prophet based on what you know from Scripture alone?
  - a. **Some prophets spoke under the direct leading of the Holy Spirit in that they foretold what God was doing and would do...**
    - (1) **Roughly 10% of the prophets of the OT fell into this category of being the direct mouthpiece for God to His people.... Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Samuel....Called by God to do God's bidding.**
      - **The Hebrew classifies these men as "men of God", "servant of God", "seers"...these were God's men called by God for a specific task mainly to speak for Him and write down His Word for posterity.**
      - **Deut. 18: 15-22 defines for us the role of God's prophet as well as describes for us the false prophet.**
      - **These prophets proclaimed the message given to them by God...they were God's spokesmen...speaking in His name and with His authority. See Ex. 4:12; Jer. 1:9; Ezek. 2:7; I Peter 1:20-21**
      - **False prophets who say they speak for God- death- Duet. 13:1-5**
    - (2) **Other Prophets simply proclaimed the Scriptures that they had at the time to the people...they illuminated upon what the prophets of God spoke from God...when we read of the school of the prophets we can think of the original seminary to a certain degree.**
      - **"Sons" or "disciples" or "company" of the prophets were young men who lived together at these different schools.**
      - **Ramah, Bethel, Gibeah, Gilgal and Jericho**
  - b. **The defining character and or purpose of the prophet of God was their steadfast teaching and proclaiming Yahweh's character and His sovereign rule in and over history: Yahweh alone was God, and in divine justice and mercy He gave order and meaning to the experiences of mankind.**
  - c. **God's prophets called mankind to repent.**
    - (1) **God's prophets whether those directly called or those disciples of the Prophets in the School of the prophets demanded ethical responsibility and theological purity of God's people and of all people made in God's image.**
    - (2) **They were also given to speaking to the social and political issues of the day bringing God's Word to bear on these for definition and judgment as well as coming restoration...whether by direct revelation from God or by way of expositing the Scriptures for the people.**

- d. An essential ingredient of prophetic inspiration was the activity of the Holy Spirit. It is said of most prophets in the Scriptures that the Spirit came upon them at the time that they prophesied. Hosea 9:7 says that the prophet is called "the man of the spirit."**
- e. NT prophets- Acts 11:28, 13:1...this office seems to have ceased and was simply a carryover from the OT until such time as God's Word was circulated and accepted...Hebrews 1:1 says basically there is no need for the office of prophet any longer... *"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by his Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world."***
- f. As believers filled with the Holy Spirit we are called upon by the Spirit of God to discern the false prophets...hence false prophesying... *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world."***

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
October 17, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What did we see about the Prophet Jonah in this first chapter?
2. What answered God's call and did exactly what it was commissioned to do?  
Why is this significant for us today?
  - a. **The wind obeyed God... he hurled it and it rose up into a mighty tempest... at God's command.**
  - b. **God's will ...will be carried out one way or another.**
  - c. **God's commands do not fall on deaf ears...they do not return void.**
  - d. **There are often times immediate consequences to our sin.**
3. What did we see about the mariners?
4. What did we see about God in this first chapter?
  - a. **God is sovereign.**
  - b. **God is everywhere.**
  - c. **God is the God of creation.**
  - d. **God of all His people...even those in Nineveh and on the boat.**
  - e. **God's will ...will be carried out nothing will thwart Him.**
  - f. **God will afflict His people to grow His people... Ps. 119:75.**
  - g. **God pursues His own...God is with us always. He doesn't let His children go.**
  - h. **God saves sinners...brings people to Himself...He substitutes Jonah for them at this point...he was their substitutionary atonement.**

C. Jonah 1:17-4:11

1. Looking at 1:17- 2:10, how would you say Jonah's attitude has changed? **First thing he does after they throw him into the ocean is to pray to God...just like the mariners did.**
2. Now let's look closely at vs. 17. What does it actually tell us?
  - a. **Through the years a lot has been made of the big fish or whale. And how the whale was God's judgment for his sin.**  
(1) **But just like the storm it was used to affect deliverance of Jonah.**  
(2) **God meant for Jonah to go to Nineveh...and he would go to Nineveh...God's plan would not be thwarted by a mere man.**
  - b. **The judgment, if you will was being thrown over the ship...1:15...which saved the ship and will ultimately "save" Jonah for he will be able to fulfill his mission from God.**
  - c. **The text says, "*And the LORD appointed (or better yet "had appointed"...He predestined) a great fish to swallow up Jonah.*"**  
**Beforehand God had already determined to have the great fish there to deliver Jonah from the ocean from which he would have drowned otherwise and been lost.**
  - d. **But it is the next line that places for some this "story" in the genre of myth; "*And Jonah was in the belly of the fish 3 days and 3 nights.*"**



3. Now let's look at his prayer 2:1-9. What are some of the aspects of this prayer that stand out at you?
  - a. **Jonah realizes that the fish is an answer to his prayer from deliverance from the sea. Verse 1 could be read from the Hebrew, *"Then Jonah prayed for deliverance from the sea to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, saying..."* This is God's grace to him keeping him from drowning.**
  - b. **He acknowledges God hand in the casting of him into the sea as God's judgement for Jonah's sinful behavior.**
  - c. **Like the psalmist before him he realizes that God has sent this affliction because he has strayed and needs to be brought back. Psalm 119:67,71,75; *"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word...It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes...in faithfulness you have afflicted me."***
  - d. **In fact, many of the phrases sound like they have come right out of the Psalms. The mark of a regenerated man...relying on God's words in their prayers.**
  - e. **What is an easy definition for repentance? To turn around?**
    - (1)**The OT defines it as making a U-turn, if you will. The word we translate "repentance" in the OT is actually a word-picture which means to return, to go back along the path on which you came.**
    - (2)**The believer cannot be lost...but when we repent we are expected to make a U-turn and go back along the road from which we came...God's way.**
    - (3)**The NT illustration of this is the Prodigal Son painfully making his way back home along the path that he had taken to a far country.**
    - (4)**Jonah, is the OT prodigal. He is the vision of the sinner/saint...so when we sin we need to be quick to repent. So if there is anything that we should emulate Jonah on it would be in his sincere contrition over his sin.**
  - f. **This is a true prayer of repentance. He does not ask for pardon...for a pardon he had already received...in the form of the fish. He does not ask God to overlook his sin, because that would be asking God to go against His nature...he repents and willingly seeks to receive his just punishment...but instead receives salvation.**
  - g. **Jonah is never out of God's sight...he is always in God's presence...even in the belly of the fish...God knew exactly where he was at all times. Jonah knows this and prays to God because he knows God will hear.**
  - h. **It felt for the time that he was alone in the deep...but with the provision of the fish before he drowned he realizes God great salvation...and in the midst of all of this he praises God... *"O LORD my God...Salvation belongs to the Lord."***
4. Only after Jonah has made the U-turn in the belly of the fish do we read in vs. 10, *"And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out of the dry land."*
  - a. **The storm was used by God to do His bidding *"The LORD hurled a great wind"*...to reveal the power of His might and to stir up the mariners to throw Jonah into the sea for his rejection of God's call.**

- b. **The fish was used by God to do His bidding, *"The LORD appointed a great fish"*...to save Jonah from drowning in the sea and to serve as a 3 day tutorial as Jonah repents and is restored and renewed by God...God afflicted hi so that he could be useful to God.**
  - c. **Now Jonah is once again prepared and ready to do God's bidding.... *"to go to Nineveh, that great city."***
- 5. A bit about Nineveh
  - a. **19 miles long and 11 wide...60 miles in circumference.**
  - b. **Larger than Babylon.**
  - c. **100' high walls...over 3 chariots wide.**
  - d. **15000 watchtowers...each of these over 200 feet high**
  - e. **Modern day Mosul, Iraq**
  - f. **Maybe close to 400,000 people in the city at the time. (Vs. 11 speaks of more than 120,000 that don't know their right hand from their left...it could be metaphorical but more than likely he was talking about 120,000 little children.)**
- 6. Chapter 3:1-10
  - a. So what happens?
    - (1)**Jonah is once again on dry land and at this time Jonah is re-commissioned by God to go to Nineveh the great city. Chapter 1:1-2 are almost identical to chapter 3:1-2. But this time he arises and goes to Nineveh. This is Jonah's practical repentance ...his U-turn being lived out.**
    - (2)**The people repent almost immediately...Jonah only gets a third of the way into the city and a mass revival breaks out. He expected that they would have mocked him for what he was saying would have been so foreign to them...and he was a Jew...really beneath them in their minds...Immediately at his preaching God's Word they believed God! In biblical language this indicates a deep repentance.**
    - (3)**The king repents and establishes a corporate fasting and repenting before the God of all creation. The king says,**
      - ***"Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish. When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God relented of the disaster that He said He would do to them, and he did not do it."***
      - What is the point here? God relented? God changed His mind?
        - **First of all, the people and the king seem to know that they deserve whatever Jonah has said will happen to them because of their sin... they are immediately overcome with the depth of their sin and they own it and cry out in repentance.**
        - **They didn't know what God might do if they repented... "Who knows?" the king said. Jonah didn't bring that message from God.**
        - **There is no sacrifices made to God but the one most dear...a broken and contrite heart.**

- **God not only heard their cries of repentance but He also saw it...in other words they were fasting before Him, they were praying otherwise living a life of faith for God to see.**
- **“Relent”? What does this mean? The Bible often uses terms that appears as if God is doing something very “humanly”...like bringing “evil” upon King Saul or in this case relenting...making it appear to them as if He had changed His mind.**
- **We know that that is not true because He is sovereign...and if He changed His mind he would have decided that what he had set out to do must be wrong...in other words, questioning Himself or His motives...not to speak of the fact that he might not have known that they were going to repent...so now He must adjust. What kind of God would that be?**
- **Actually He is the God who will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy...his own from every nation tongue and tribe.**

**(4) Jonah in a powerful way shows us what happens to all God’s elect from every nation, tongue and tribe, when He calls them/us and they respond...in the case in mass! Unlike Jonah when he was called fled.**

- b. In the annuals of Assyria there is no record of so great a revival. Do you find that strange that so big an event would not be recorded?

- (1) Recorded in the Jewish Tanakh (The Hebrew Bible), in the works of Islam, and in certain Jewish historians like Josephus...which were written or compiled hundreds of years later.**
- (2) Think of the Exodus...there is no Egyptian record of the Exodus by the Jews...**

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
October 24, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. How does the Bible, specifically the OT, define the act of repentance?
2. What stood out to you from Chapters 2 and 3 that you have never seen or thought about before?
  - a. **The Ninevites repented...and they had no reference about God as the Jews or Jonah had. All they had in them was the image of God that told them things are right in this world...though they didn't have a clue.**
  - b. **But like all Gentiles in the OT and NT when God calls they repent and receive God's Grace. None of these Gentiles had any more or any less than us today. None of us had that amount of information and history with God as the Jews...that is what caused their sin so much worse.**

C. Chapter 4

1. Why is Jonah angry in verses 1-4? What is his concern?
  - a. **That God would have the audacity to save these people...not His own people. ..but his own people were very much like him...hardheaded, stubborn...rebellious....God saves His own.**
    - (1) **Remember he prophesied and taught during the time of Jeroboam II, a king who walked in the way of evil...all along hoping and expecting that the Jews would repent...but they hadn't and here are these gentile dogs repenting and God is showing them mercy.**
    - (2) **Interestingly, he is basically charging God with showing favoritism/ partiality...**
    - (3) **Jonah's own prejudice is blinding him... just like it has blinded many Christian saints in the past. Prejudice- showing favoritism is a great sin. We know God sees it this way because from beginning to end God has commanded His people NOT to show favoritism. Jonah certainly reflects all people in general but all too often God's own people.**
  - b. **He was hoping to be the one to see God destroy these evil people and go home in triumph.**
2. Soooo...is he truly repentant after all?
  - a. **The outward signs that are seen from these Ninevites are not seen in Jonah...why is it that God's people can more often than not be more obstinate than converted pagans?**
    - (1) **It has been said that the best Reformed Christians are the ones that are newest to the faith!**
    - (2) **We are so complacent in our activity and ethics that we can't get out of our way...**
  - b. **Jonah, after all that God has done for him Jonah does not seem compelled to feel for these lost souls what so ever...and he is not ashamed to let God know how he feels.**
  - c. **You gotta love God's response to Jonah... "Do you do well to be angry?"**

- d. **Put that in modern language.**
    - (1) Do you have the right to be angry?**
    - (2) How is your anger helping?**
    - (3) You, of all people, really?**
3. Even after God's gentle rebuke, Jonah does not back down. So what does God do?
- a. **The people are still repenting...God's not stopping it or destroying the city so he sits and stewes over what he sees as a slap in the face.**
  - b. **Also, in his mind how could he be considered a prophet if at the end of the 40 days destruction didn't come upon the people...**
    - (1) since that was a mark of a prophet that his prophecies come true...**
    - (2) and if they don't...then they are false prophets deserving death...unless God stepped in...as He does here.**
  - c. **Just like God had appointed the great fish to save Jonah...God now appoints, or had appointed (predestined) before this, a plant to shade Jonah...once again Jonah led himself to believe that God was going to bless him concerning the people of Nineveh.**
  - d. **But right on cue...God had also appointed a worm to eat into the plant to kill it and He appointed the scorching east wind to punish Jonah once again for his arrogance and His prejudice and His pride.**  
**Scorching East Wind= a swirling wind that picks up and a dryness so severe that it literally sucks the moisture out of a person...it is known to mummify people who die in the desert.**
  - e. **Jonah did not see what this affliction was for...he was blinded in so many ways...so blind that it would be better to die than to go home in such a disgrace to tell people that by his preaching God saved the most evil people on the earth...**
  - f. **He is more concerned with himself than the souls of people...again.**
4. What are some of the take away lessons from this book for us today?
- a. **We are to go when God calls.**
  - b. **We are to have more concern for others than ourselves.**
  - c. **We are not to show partiality.**
  - d. **Who are we to judge God's motives, actions and word? We have been saved from our sin when we were still fighting against God... (Rom. 5:8)...we in no way deserved...or earned...or were entitled to God's salvation.**
  - e. **Jonah is every day man...who fails to keep God's commands...fails to even want to keep them.**
  - f. **We are left with a bitter prophet...who adamantly and sourly was not happy with God's decisions and actions. He would not save what Jonah thought were His own people but He would save these pagans...it just didn't make sense to him.**
  - g. **Even Christians like Jonah...who has had a good beginning as a prophet for God to the Northern Kingdom but who let his pride get the best of him in the end...probably died a lonely dejected man...still a child of God but one of those who aren't too much fun to be around...**

- h. It is a sad story, really...for Jonah was the OT Prodigal Son and yet at the end it does not appear that he enjoyed the blessings of his Sonship as the Prodigal did in the NT. Jonah said that he will do ok in his anger but could never support his answer with proof. But God does well in being merciful to His elect.**
  - i. But look at God...**
    - (1)He calls and calls His people that he loves.**
    - (2)He afflicts His people when we try to go our own way to cause us to make a U-turn to go back His way.**
    - (3)He never lets us go...we may fall into sin but He never sits still t let us stay in it...**
    - (4)And He never stops teaching us about our sin, because He does not want us to stay the same...he sanctifies us making into the image of His son.**
- D. Father Mapple's sermon... found in the classic MOBY DICK, by Herman Melville. A sermon that covers the first 3 chapters...a sermon that ends well unlike the book of Jonah.**

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

November 7, 2018

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. What was God teaching Jonah after all the years that he served God faithfully?
2. What are some of the lessons that we learned from Jonah's actions?

### C. Amos 1-2:1-5

#### 1. Introduction

##### a. Date:

- (1) Sometime between 790-740 B.C. Isaiah would have started during this time. "...2 years before the earthquake" places this according to archeological studies around 760 BC -plus or minus 10 years. (See also Amos 3:15 & Zech. 14:5) Sooo... 775BC to 755 BC**
- (2) King of the Northern Kingdom was Jeroboam II...King of Southern Kingdom- Judah was Uzziah**
- (3) There was peace between Israel and Judah at the time. Israel and Judah were once again prosperous and had settled into, yet again, a false sense of security because the nations around them are weak at this time.**

##### b. Amos- H

#### **(1) His name/person-**

- **"to be a burden"**
- **"to carry a burden"**
- **"to sustain"= Yahweh has carried... or it might be short for Amasiah= "Yahweh hears"**
- **Rabbinical tradition asserts that this was actually a title given to him by those who didn't like his message...it was too much of a burden for them so they called him a burden...today...a pain in the "rear end" or worse.**
- **Also, rabbinical teaching would consider Amos to be a prophet/prosecutor for God...especially when he brings "suit" against Israel.**
- **In Jewish tradition he is known as a wealthy businessman...but his life in agriculture enables him to speak the language of the people. God uses him and all the knowledge He has given him.**
- **Having said this...Orthodox Jewish tradition has always asserted that this book was in fact written by Amos of Tekoa, the prophet of God.**
- **This is the only occurrence of this name in the OT. There is an Amos mentioned in Luke genealogy but nothing is known of him.**

#### **(2) His home- Tekoa**

- **5 miles south of Bethlehem located on the highest hill at 2,700 feet...so he was from Judea.**
- **It is from here that he will speak forth his prophecy of God's judgment.**

- **He was a shepherd...also an owner of fruit trees...dresser of sycamore figs...each fruit had to be pierced in order for it to ripen properly...part of that mandate to care for God's garden going forward...like vine dressing in a vineyard. This was a very important crop in that region at that time.**

c. The book

- (1) **This book is part of the division of the Hebrew Bible called "the latter prophets"... Isaiah to Malachi.**
  - (2) **Internal evidence and most contemporary scholars agree that it is chronologically a few years BEFORE Hosea.**
  - (3) **This may be the FIRST of the writing prophets and as such set the genre for all to follow (since we do not know who wrote the book of Jonah)...and is classic Hebrew prophecy which is formed into Hebrew poetry.**
  - (4) **Since we don't chant Hebrew poetry we wouldn't know this any other way...unless you went to synagogue when they were reading from this book...but the chanting/musical tone for this book is set to a funeral dirge to communicate further the message that God was wanting to make clear.**
2. Verse 1 tells us that he was given a vision by God "...he saw..." concerning Israel...the Northern Kingdom. Based on what we see and hear in these first 2 chapters what would you say is the overall message and what seems to be the problem?
- a. **War and betrayal.**
  - b. **Judgment...punishment for sin.**
  - c. **Because the people of these places were either at the end of their usefulness by God ...or they were being judge because of their rejection of God's law as in the case of Israel ...and eventually Judah.**
  - d. **But also, to give the people yet another "chance" to receive the salvation of the LORD.**
  - e. Now, how can I say that? Are they choosing their salvation...is that what I mean when I say to give them yet another chance to receive the salvation of the LORD?
    - (1) **They are not choosing salvation...all God's children are given adequate time to respond to God's gift of salvation in repentance and faith.**
    - (2) **God always speaks of His gospel up and until He determines to actually judge the people. He always speaks of His redemption and the need of the people to repent so that those who are His will do just that ...so that all who are His are brought in.**
    - (3) **He is a gracious God and a righteous judge and none who are His will be lost.**
3. Verse 2 is an interesting verse to be sure. What images are conjured up and what is He communicating through Amos?
- a. **They set the tone for all that will follow.**
  - b. **Judgment is coming...A single lions roar can be heard up to 5 miles away. Lion supposedly roar for very specific reasons:**
    - (1) **To tell other lions ...like mates and cubs...where they are;**



- (2) To show how big they are;
- (3) To warn other lions that this is his pride and to stay away...or else.
- (4) Often the lion will roar before he tearing into his pray...to warn others that this is his.
- c. Everyone take notice now and later...
  - (1) "The LORD roars..."= He roars now and He will roar.
  - (2) In that, He roars now ahead of judgment so that they can know why He will be judging them...and for those who are His to take notice, repent and be spared God's wrath. God gives warning before He strikes or before He tears.
  - (3) And, He will roar later when he actually carries out His judgment.
  - (4) When a Lion enters the grazing ground of the sheep the shepherd mourns for there is little he can do to keep a lion from carrying away or just killing some of the sheep
- 4. Each of the judgments against these pagan people begin... *"For 3 transgressions of, and for four..."* speaks of their sins being full before the LORD...as in one transgression too far. What is the sin (the one sin that went to far...maybe) of each of the people groups from Syria, Philistines/(Palestine), Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab in Amos 1:3-2:3?
  - a. Syria- mistreated Gilead with extreme cruelty. ...this was a common method to make sure that there would be no successive generations of the conquered peoples.
  - b. Palestine/Philistines- would raid and sell into slavery whole groups of Jews...mainly selling them to their "brothers" in Edom.
  - c. Tyre- slave traders as well, when the people became refugees...they would run to Tyre because of the covenant made between Solomon and Hiram, king of Tyre but later kings did not keep their word (I Kings 5:12).
  - d. Edom- trading their "brothers" as slave...for their awful treatment of their brothers when they were at their weakest...they pillaged, raped and murdered at will against Judah and even the people of the Northern Kingdom that ran and received sanctuary in Judah.
  - e. Ammon- they ravaged their opponent which was standard operating procedure for pagan kingdoms to keep a control of future generations....and all of this just so they can grab more land which meant in their eyes more power...he who rules the land...RULES!
  - f. Moab- they burned the bones of their opponent (read burned alive) so as to keep them from entering an afterlife.
- 5. What specifically is the judgement for each? (Actually let's simplify this a bit: What are the main forms of judgment that God uses against these people groups?
  - a. Their ruthlessness was condemned by God for it is God's to avenge no one else's when it comes to crimes against His people.
  - b. Fire/ devastation...annihilation of inhabitants...at least those who worshiped idols...
    - (1) Will send a fire upon the houses – think Sodom and Gomorrah. We know where they lived because of the biblical description but any external evidence does not exist concerning many of the actual peoples.

- (2) God will “cut off the inhabitants”= to annihilate the people all the way to the valley of Aven= Valley of Wickedness/ Idols...all throughout the lands of all these pagans...some peoples have been totally lost to time by God’s judgment.
- c. God will use the elements...whirlwind and tempest...a strong East wind which would consume as if being burned up *“bellows of fire”*...a tornado that would further destroy...Chapter 1:14
- d. Exile
- (1) Those who are left not only Syria but in all its territories of which Beth-Eden is one will be exiled to Kir by the Assyrians...an area that would become part of the Mede and Persian empire at some point. (II Kings 16:9).
- (2) Ammonites will be taken into Assyria and then into Babylon...so they would be lost into these other cultures so there would be no cultural distinctions left.
- (3) Jerusalem will eventually be sacked by Nebuchadnezzar’s army. And the city of Peace/Shalom will house peace any more for it will be destroyed and burned.
6. Look at Chapter 2:4-5. He begins with the same refrain, *“For 3 transgressions of Judah, and for 4, I will not revoke the punishment...”*. Now Judah has participated in the same sins as their neighbors but what is it particularly that God holds His people to account for? And what will God do to them?
- a. **They have rejected the Law of God...not kept His statutes.**
- b. **They are liars...just like their fathers. The Hebrew idiom “to walk after” ...or “after which their father’s walked”- meant they followed in lock step in the lies of their father which led them astray from the LORD.**
- c. **They are prideful...God won’t really do that to us...after all Jerusalem is His city...and we are His people...He won’t treat us as He will other people...**
- d. **But judgment is to come:**
- (1) **He will send a fire ...like all the other warnings, but...**
- (2) **It will only destroy Judah’s strongholds because God has other plans for Judah than annihilation.**
7. Thinking about these warning for a minute on the pagans and the Judeans...what do these communicate to us? How should God’s actions here motivate our faith?
- a. **The sins of Judah are just as serious as the other sins committed by the other people groups.**
- b. **God’s justice is perfect and equitable!**
- c. **This reminded one of Genesis 3...for God addresses Satan 1<sup>st</sup> in Genesis 3 and then Adam and Eve...here He addresses the other people then He gets to his own people when they think they will “bite the bullet”.**
- d. **Their pride led them to believe that they would slide by...this was a warning for everyone else...and of course he had to say something about His people to appear equitable.**
- e. **If you wondered what straying or drifting away (Hebrews 2:1) looks like ...it looks like this in so many ways.**

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

November 14, 2018

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. Just a side note concerning something we talked about when we looked at Jonah. I asked the question then concerning why there is no written record of this mass revival in Nineveh...was it because it wasn't recorded, which is highly unlikely since the kings recorded all their actions...or was it subsequently deleted by the next kings because it would have marked a sign of weakness on such a powerful and ruthless peoples?
  - a. **I made the case for the deletion...which was common in those days...like the non-reference in Egyptian annals of Moses and the Exodus.**
  - b. **Well, in Texas, this week (Nov. 2018), the Texas Board of Education has decided to delete any reference to Hillary Clinton and to Helen Keller from the social studies sighting that they didn't have a significant enough impact in the social environment of their times...and that they were seeking to lighten the teaching load of overworked teachers.**
  - c. **Then later in the same week it was being voted on to delete Moses from a classification "...of individuals who use principles of laws and government institutions influenced the founding fathers of this country." Interesting that with the last couple of years, the Texas Supreme Court has declared that Moses and the 10 Commandments did in fact influence our founding documents...state and federal documents.**
  - d. **So it seems that this type of deleting history goes on in every state every year proving the hypothesis that has been posited for years that this practice has been going on for thousands of years.**
2. Remembering what we saw in Chapter 1- 2:5; what do we see and hear in these first 2 chapters? Specifically, what would you say is the overall message and what seems to be the problem?
  - a. **Everyone highlighted here is doing what is "right in their own eyes" ...again!**
  - b. **War and betrayal.**
  - c. **Judgment...punishment for sin.**
    - (1)**Because the people of these places were either at the end of their usefulness by God ...or...**
    - (2)**They were being judge because of their rejection of God's law as in the case of North and South Kingdoms.**
3. These are passages about judgment to be sure! Where is grace seen in these passages? (The God of the OT is always seen as a tyrant...but is that all He is? How would you show that He is more even from a text like this one?)
  - a. **He is telling everyone ahead of the destruction what is coming.**
  - b. **He even spells out in the case of inhabitants of Syria which ones He will target...those who worship idols in the valley of Aven.**
  - c. **His judgment is in and of itself a grace.**
    - (1)**As God judges His enemies He is keeping His promise to His people.**

- (2) **As God disciplines/punishes His people He is keeping His promise to discipline those that He loves...sanctification process of those who are His.**
- d. **By warning the people before the judgment falls He is giving the people (His people in every nation, tongue and tribe) yet another "chance" to receive the salvation of the LORD.**
  - (1) **They are not choosing salvation as in making an individual choice to become a Christian...all God's children are given adequate time to respond to God's gift of salvation in repentance and faith.**
  - (2) **God always speaks of His gospel up and until He determines to actually judge the people. He always speaks of His redemption and the need of the people to repent so that those who are His will do just that ...so that all who are His are brought in.**
  - (3) **He is a gracious God and a righteous judge and none who are His will be lost. In fact, He is not willing or able to lose any of His own....as Jesus tells us in the gospels.**

C. Chapter 2:4-15

1. Look again at verses 4-5. He begins with the same refrain, *"For 3 transgressions of Judah, and for 4, I will not revoke the punishment..."*. Now Judah has participated in the same sins as their neighbors but what is it particularly that God holds His people to account for? And what will God do to them?
  - a. **They have rejected the Law of God...not kept His statutes. See Jer. 9:26**
  - b. **They are liars...just like their fathers. The Hebrew idiom "to walk after" ...or "after which their father's walked"- meant they followed in lock step in the lies of their father which led them astray from the LORD.**
    - (1) **Think again of Hebrews 2:1.**
    - (2) **See also Habakkuk 2:18...lies and their connection to idols.**
  - c. **They are prideful...God won't really do that to us...after all Jerusalem is His city...and we are His people...He won't treat us as He will other people...**
  - d. **When we reject God's law and don't keep His statutes we are REDUCED to lies, pride and walking in the ways of the world to seek for purpose and satisfaction that is always elusive.**
    - (1) **We are destined to repeat the sins of the past because we sin the same way as our fathers when we seek what is right in our own eyes.**
    - (2) **In our reduced position we are destined to go after the idols of the people around us...for these sins and one more... God will hold us all accountable...**
  - e. **But judgment is to come:**
    - (1) **He will send a fire ...like all the other warnings, but...this fire will be the Babylonian army.**
    - (2) **It (they...Nebuchadnezzar's army) will only destroy Judah's strongholds because God has other plans for Judah than annihilation.**

2. Again... just so we are clear, Judah won't Fall until 587BC...and this is being prophesied around 760 BC...so almost 200 years later ...sooo.... What is God's point... why is He giving them so much warning?
3. Chapter 2:6-16. A court room opening argument is what is before us in these verses.
  - a. It is an interesting thing...he begins this section against Israel the same way as the rest, *"For 3 transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment."* But what does He do next in verses 6b-8 that is different from the others and why?
    - (1) **He actually lists 4 specific sins of Israel...He only listed one for the others except Judah...lists 2...specifically, rejection of the law of the LORD and lies that led them astray.**
      - **Social injustice- vs. 6b-7b**
      - **Sexual immorality- 7b**
      - **Idolatry- 8a**
      - **Religious and ceremonial abuses-8b...in this case by drinking the wine gotten from their social injustice...taxing the poor for their extravagance...or in this case using the poor to pay their tithe and offerings to the Temple by ill-gotten gain rather than honesty.**
      - **But of course, these 4 merely represent the multitude of other sins or the outworking of the same sins differently per each sinner.**
    - (2) **Because He is building His case against them...their end is nearer than they think. Their world will be coming to an end in less than 40 years...**
      - **As the Northern kingdom will fall to the Assyrians in 722BC.**
      - **But the deportations would begin around 740...probably less than 20 years after this prophecy by Amos.**
  - b. Now look at vs. 9-11...what is God saying to them here? What lessons should we take from this?
    - (1) **God says, "Look at what I have done for you". See also Isaiah 43:4.**
    - (2) **By listing these at the "trial", He is calling on them to deny them if they can...see vs. 11. All of these are God's means of grace for His people in the North if only they would have seen them as such.**
    - (3) **Lessons we should learn:**
      - **God controls the good , the bad, and the ugly things of life...nothing happens outside of His watchful eye. *"I destroyed..."*; *"I brought you up..."*; *I raised up some of your sons..."* Oh...and He gets all the credit and glory for all that He does...if we don't give it to Him He will take it for Himself...because it is the fact! And when we try to take credit we are making ourselves out to be thieves.**
      - **We often need to be reminded of the mercies we have received from the LORD.**

- **God gives so liberally to His children and His gifts often point out our sin even more when we remember all that God has done and how we take for granted these gifts and dishonor His love towards us.**
  - **Can any of us deny God's grace...His trustworthiness? It would not be good to do so. How can we act so unlovingly to such a GOOD God?**
  - **The psalter constantly draws our attention to the wondrous acts of God...when reading the rest of scripture we cannot get away from the fact that this God...the One who created all that there is...is the same God who provides and delights in His people.**
- c. When we look at verse 12, what does God say that they did with all that God did for them?
- (1) In stark contrast to what the LORD had just listed for them... *"But you..."* of all people...people of my own choosing... *"but you..."***
- (2) They mocked and abused the "means of grace" that God had provided...**
- (3) They mocked and abused the servants that God sent amongst them to lead them back to God in repentance...His Nazarites and His Prophets...**
- **Causing the Nazarites to break their vows...the Nazarites were bright lights of Christian/believing piety...**
    - **men who were willing to deny themselves of many of the lawful delights like drink and other foods not forbidden by God or the Law as an example to the people and as a blessing as they were among them unmolested.**
    - **Think of those called to celibacy in the NT... it is not for all people...just those who are chosen by God for that purpose...for the furtherance of the kingdom unhindered and for a blessing to God's church as we see an example of faithfulness lived before us every day as they remain celibate... though God prefers marriage for His people to be fruitful and to multiply.**
  - **Telling the prophets what to say until penalty of death. (Amos 7:12) They should have treated them with the respect that they deserved...for when God's people honor God's called servants the whole Church is blessed. Psalm 134.**
- d. What is He telling them in verses 13-16?
- (1) *"Behold..."*- Consider...rethink the way you have been thinking...actually here it means Look intently at the truth of your judgment.**
- (2) *"I will press you down in your place..."*- This is a cart that has been "stuck I the mud"...even more so since God pressed it down in that mud so far that it can't breakout now...or won't be able to in a few short years.... Israel will not be able to flee judgment. Think also of Rev. 14:20.**

**(3) “Flight shall perish from the swift and the strong shall not retain his strength, nor shall the mighty save his life.”** The will to live will perish...the will to fight any more will be taken from them. Ex. The stories are told in WWII about ships that were sunk and the men that got off and had to float in their life preservers day after day and how after so many days in the heat without water or food and hurting from wounds and warding off shark attacks men just started dropping their life preservers and sunk to their deaths just giving up...with no further will to live. Even those who were in better condition than others would just disappear in the night going to their deaths.

**(4) Vss. 15-16...all the might of the army will fail...for the might was based on the strength and will of the LORD...without the LORD there is nothing...**

**(5) “...in that day.”** The day of Assyria’s invasion...

- **which will begin in just a few short years as the Assyrian Empires strength grows so fast that no one will see them coming until it is too late...God raised them up at just the right time.**
- **Tiglath-Pileser III comes to power around 745 BC and everyone in their path was too weak to do anything to defend themselves against this army that God had raised up as judgment against most all the people in the region.**
  - **As God was growing their strength and fierceness...**
  - **He was also weakening the people especially Israel...the political climate and social climate after Jeroboam II dies leads to further decay and weakness to the point of collapse ...there were multiple assassinations of kings in succession until Assyria comes and begins to deport Israel’s people and all of this is because of their spiritual declined and rejection.**

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
January 23, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What do you remember about the person of Amos?
  - a. **His name could actually be title or a “nickname which means burden” given to him by those who found his message to be a burden to them....or in today’s vernacular “a pain in the rear end” ...or worse.**
  - b. **Prophesied 775-755 B.C. is my best estimation.**
  - c. **He was a contemporary of Isaiah. He prophesied a few years BEFORE Hosea.**
  - d. **This may be the first of the writing prophets.**
  - e. **He is from Tekoa... 5 miles south of Bethlehem.**
  - f. **It seems that he prophesied the downfall of Israel and other nations from here.**
  - g. **He was a shepherd and a dresser of fruit trees...so tradition has him as a business man...but one who must have come up through the rank and file since he talks like one of the lowly peoples...not aristocracy...**
  - h. **Orthodox Judaism has always asserted that this book was actually written by Amos of Tekoa, prophet of God.**
2. Setting the stage for Amos’ prophecy:
  - a. **The king of the Northern Kingdom was Jeroboam II...the king of Southern Kingdom- Judah was Uzziah**
  - b. **There was peace between Israel and Judah at the time. Israel and Judah were once again prosperous and had settled into, yet again, a false sense of security because the nations around them are weak at this time.**
  - c. **But the time was coming for judgement so he was given a vision “...he saw...” and it is what he saw that made his message a burden on the people since everything looked good at the time.**
3. Remembering what we saw in Amos 1- 2:3; Syria, Gaza/Philistines, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab all had charges brought against them by God’s prosecutor; Amos. What generally were the charges and what was the overall message?
  - a. **Everyone highlighted here is doing what is “right in their own eyes” ...again!**
  - b. **War and betrayal.**
  - c. **Judgment...punishment for sin.**
    1. **Because the people of these places were either at the end of their usefulness by God ...or...**
    2. **They were being judge because of their rejection of God’s law as in the case of Judah, as well.**
  - b. **But also grace towards those from these nations that will be His...for they are warned ahead of time of the coming wrath**



C. Finishing up chapter 2.

1. Looking closely at Amos 2: 4-5 we see that Judah has participated in the same sins as their neighbors but what is it particularly that God holds His people to account for? And what will God do to them?

a. **They have rejected the Law of God...not kept His statutes. See Jer. 9:26**

b. **They are liars...just like their fathers. The Hebrew idiom “to walk after” ...or “after which their father’s walked”- meant they followed in lock step in the lies of their fathers who led them astray from the LORD.**

(1) Think again of Hebrews 2:1.

(2) **See also Habakkuk 2:18... “What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies?” ...interesting connection lies and idols. God also says in Psalm 135:18, “Those who make them become like them, so do all who trust in them.”**

- **So in highlighting the fact that they are following in the steps of their fathers with their lies He is also highlighting their idolatry.**

- **Which begs the question, how many other things are being thought of in this short form indictment?**

  - **Immorality of all kinds to be sure**

  - **Spiritual adultery as well...**

c. **They are prideful... throughout the Prophets we see the people questioning the prophets call to repentance and the judgment is coming for not repenting...“God won’t really do that to us...after all Jerusalem is His city...and we are His people...He won’t treat us as He will other people...”**

d. **When we reject God’s law and don’t keep His statutes we are REDUCED to lies, pride and walking in the ways of the world to seek for purpose and satisfaction that is always elusive.**

(1) **We are destined to repeat the sins of the past because we sin the same way as our fathers when we seek what is right in our own eyes.**

(2) **In our reduced position, a position, by the way, that we have chosen to place ourselves in...we are destined to go after the idols of the people around us...for these sins and one more... God will hold us all accountable...**

e. **But judgment is to come:**

(1) **He will send a fire ...like all the other warnings, but...this fire will be the Babylonians.**

(2) **It (they...Nebuchadnezzar’s army) will only destroy Judah’s strongholds because God has other plans for Judah than total annihilation.**

2. Again... just so we are clear, Judah won’t Fall until 587BC...and this is being prophesied around 760 BC...so almost 200 years later.

3. In Amos 2:6-8, what 4 main sins does God highlight in this initial indictment against Israel/the Northern Kingdom?

a. **Four “main” sins:**

(1) **Social injustice- vs. 6b-7b**

(2) **Sexual immorality- 7b**

**(3) Idolatry- 8a**

**(4) Religious and ceremonial abuses-8b...in this case by drinking the wine gotten from their social injustice...taxing the poor for their extravagance...or in this case using the poor to pay their tithe and offerings to the Temple by ill-gotten gain rather than honesty.**

- b. But of course, these 4 merely represent the multitude of other sins or the outworking of the same sins differently per each sinner.**
- c. Because He is building His case against them...their end is nearer than they think. Their world will be coming to an end in less than 40 years...**

- **As the Northern kingdom will fall to the Assyrians in 722BC.**
- **But the deportations would begin around 740...probably less than 20 years after this prophecy by Amos.**

- 4. What is perhaps yet another sin that God highlights against Israel that certainly comes as a result of the first 4 in verses 9-12?
  - a. Forsaking the gifts of God's mercy and grace towards them.**
  - b. They are denying God...**
    - 1. His provision for them**
    - 2. His goodness toward them**
    - 3. His deliverance of them**
    - 4. His grace placed upon them**
    - 5. God is saying, basically, "Look at what I have done for you all along."**
  - c. And based on the fact that God is pointing it out...it is obvious that they have long ago taken God's grace for granted and stopped giving Him thanks for His GOODNESS to them.**
  - d. This text seems to be really for us centuries later...for they were to be judged ...there was no turning from their sin.**
    - (1) God is most certainly saying this to future generations to remember and give thanks for all that God has given us...daily privately and publically. See III Cor. 9:15.**
    - (2) It reminds us that we often need to be reminded of the mercies, goodness and grace of God toward us because we allow ourselves to forget...as these people did.**
    - (3) One of the results of God pointing out His mercies, goodness and grace is that when we really "see"...it reminds us of how we have abused our position thus driving us to recognize our sin and seek to repent and be renewed and strengthened in Christ. Bringing us to ask...hopefully... "how can we be so "bad/evil" toward such a gracious God?"**
  - e. At the end of verses 11, God asks a great question, "Is it not indeed so, O people of Israel?" He is backing them into a corner asking them if they will deny any of these that have come from God alone?**
  - f. What God talks about here are they taking advantage of the "means of grace"...not sacraments...but means that reveal His grace ..on-going and continual while it lasted...until the time was right for them to be judged.**
  - g. They are committing spiritual adultery...that is they are placing anything else in the place of God...their desires, ambitions, loves...before God. This is a sin that follows all of us.**

5. What type of punishment does God have for them that he will not revoke...see verses 13-16?
  - a. ***"Behold..."- Consider...rethink the way you have been thinking...***
    6. **Actually here it means "Look intently at the truth of your judgments...decisions...beliefs...ethics!"**
    7. **This is actually a Hebrew picture of "sun rise" in play here.**
      - the sun rises to expose what needs to be seen...
      - the sun comes up giving hope for a new day and a bright day ahead.
  - d. ***"I will press you down in your place..."***
    1. **This is a cart that has been "stuck in the mud"...**
    2. **Even more than that ... God has pressed it down in that mud so far that it can't breakout now...or won't be able to in a few short years... Israel will not be able to flee judgment. Think also of Rev. 14:20.**
    3. **This is another word picture of a cart being stuck in the mud and left until the ground dries up out of neglect by the cart owner...because when the mud dries it is like concrete it won't be moved...just like God's judgment nothing will stop it or move it, if you will.**
  - e. ***"Flight shall perish from the swift and the strong shall not retain his strength, nor shall the mighty save his life."*** **The will to live will perish...the will to fight any more will be taken from them. All hope is gone that there will be a brighter tomorrow. Interesting, there are days that it looks that way in this life today... to too many people. What is the answer?**
    - (1) **The Church has the answer.**
      - It must believe the Truth.
      - It must proclaim the Truth.
      - And it must contend for the Truth.
    - (2) **When we remain silent...or worse yet when we acquiesce to the influences of the world...all hope is lost...for the Church is meant to be a blessing and a witness for the Truth...the LORD God Almighty...and when we don't do as we have been "tasked" to do...the world around us suffers...believer and non-believer.**
  - f. **Vss. 15-16...all the might of the army will fail...for the might was based on the strength and will of the LORD...without the LORD there is nothing...**
  - g. ***"...in that day."*** **The day of Assyria's invasion...**
    - (1) **which will begin in just a few short years as the Assyrian Empires strength grows so fast that no one will see them coming until it is too late...God raised them up at just the right time.**
    - (2) **Tiglath-Pileser III comes to power around 745 BC and everyone in their path was too weak to do anything to defend themselves against this army that God had raised up as judgment against most all the people in the region.**
      - As God was growing Assyria's strength and fierceness...
      - He was also weakening the people especially Israel/ the Northern Kingdom...

- **The political climate and social climate after Jeroboam II dies leads to further decay and weakness to the point of collapse**
- **There were multiple assassinations of kings in succession, some “kings” did not last more than a couple months in power...the nation was an economic, spiritual, and emotional wreck by the time that Assyria comes and begins to deport Israel’s people , starting around 740 BC and all of this is because of their spiritual declined and rejection of God and His Word.**
- **God takes the power from His people and the army of Israel and gives it to the armies and leadership of Assyria. Anyone here bothered by that statement? Why or why not?**

**(3) Historically we know that about 40 + years later Sennacherib ...who is now king of Assyria...will still be rampaging against a league of nations that were seeking to oppose him...and among those nations was Judah. King Hezekiah had entered into a league with Egypt, Assyria’s sworn enemy at the time. He will begin his campaign with approximately 200, 000 men.**

- ***We have this from Sennacherib’s own annuals; “Because Hezekiah, king of Judah, would not submit to my yoke, I came up against him and by force of arms and by might of my power I took 46 of his strong fenced cities, and of the smaller towns which were scattered about, I took and plundered a countless number. From these places I took and carried off 200, 156 persons, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mules, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude; and Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city to hem him in, and raising a bank of earth against the gates, so as to prevent escape...Then upon Hezekiah there fell the fear of the power of my arms, and he sent out to me the chiefs and elders of Jerusalem with 30 talents of gold and 80 talents of silver, and other divers treasures, a rich and immense booty...All these things were brought to me at Nineveh, the seat of my government.”***
- **We have seen the personal account from a king...but now lets here a bit from The King and His Word...which tells the whole story. From II Kings 18-19 and II Chr. 32 the events of this siege and the subsequent events after wards are recounted.**
  - **Sennacherib has taken control of the Judean country side.**
  - **Hezekiah had tried to buy off Sennacherib with almost all the monies from the Royal Treasury as well as the Temple Treasury...but it didn’t work. Sennacherib took the money and came and laid siege to Jerusalem any way.**
  - **He will lay siege to Jerusalem thinking that He has a superior force...forgetting WHO it is that has given Him his marching orders to deal with the surrounding nations even more that Tiglath-Pileser III.**

- During the siege the people begin to falter,( interestingly, the Assyrians had not yet built a siege wall, yet)...and Hezekiah and Isaiah pray to the LORD and Isiah assures Hezekiah that Sennacherib will not prevail.
- II Kings 19:32-37 tells “the rest of the story”- *“Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the Lord. For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David. And that night the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home and lived at Nineveh. And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword and escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.*
- So interestingly enough there is no mention of this terrible defeat in Sennacherib’s annuals. He probably didn’t feel obliged to mention it since they had not technically been defeated by Hezekiah...and opposing king...so He took much of his plunder and went home.
- But just as interesting, he never tried against to come against Jerusalem or Judah for that matter...
- As the text says...some 20 years later it would seem he was murdered by two of his sons as he was worshiping at his god’s temple and was subsequently succeeded by another son, Esarhaddon about 681 BC.

6. Why are passages like these helpful for us today? Since- *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*...since this is true...what do these first 2 chapters teach us for today?
7. Thinking about these “charges”...is the world any different today? If so how...?
8. How are God’s people doing today? In other words...if you were to grade the church what grade would you give it and why?

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
February 6, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review- remember the title of this Bible study series- Lessons from the Minor Prophets.

1. What do passages concerning God's judgment teach us for today? Since- "All Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."...since this is true...what do these first 2 chapters teach us for today?
2. How are God's people doing today? In other words...if you were to grade the church what grade would you give it and why?

C. Amos 3:1-8

1. What is God doing and saying in verse 1-2?

a. Vs. 1-

- (1) He removes all doubt from them as to who is talking.**
- (2) This and the rest of the verses are here to convince these people of God's controversy with them and His resolve in upholding His own Law.**
- (3) "If you won't listen to anything else, you will stop and *"HEAR"* what I am saying now." They had refused Words of comfort and counsel when it came...now they will be made to hear this...no choice...they will listen now.**
  - **Listen up...**
  - **Be aware that this is your final warning...**
  - **Hear me now...your very life depends upon it...at least to those who are His.**
  - **God is calling them out...if you will...You will now listen...when you haven't been willing?**
- (4) He has charged them and they are expected and will take notice.**
- (5) God was faithful to all His people (Israel and Judah...for they were one family then)...He brought them all out...not just the remnant...His fidelity cannot be questioned.**

b. Vs. 2-

- (1) "You only have I known..."**
  - **God chose them, alone from all the peoples in the world. It is not that He doesn't know the others...obviously He does ...He made them...but it is like: We may "know" the other kids in our neighborhood or church, but we really only "know" our own children as their parents. Only His Children have received His favors.**
  - **God placed His name upon them, alone. Of all the people in the world they knew His personal name.**
  - **God cut a covenant with them, alone.**
  - **God has conversed with them.**
  - **He gave them His Word in many different forms.**

- **God focuses on them...He knows them intimately...they are His children and other nations are not.**
  - **He blesses them with His presence.**
  - **This describes God's relationship with His Church over the rest of the world.**
- (2) *"...therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."*
- **Hebrews 12:3-12** tells us how God treats those whom He has chosen...and it tells us why He does what He has done.
    - **For those who are truly His discipline leads us back to a restored relationship...**
    - **For those who aren't it is a just judgment on their rejection of Him.**
  - **From Matthew Henry- *"God makes known these distinguishing favors of God to us (His presence, His blessing, etc.), if these don't restrain us from sin, they will not exempt us from punishment, in fact, the nearer one is to God in profession, the more surely, and the more quickly God may more severely reckon with the, when they by willful sin profane God's character, disgrace their relationship with Him, putting a slight upon the favors and honors with which they have been distinguish from the world by God."***
    - **In other words, if all of God's mercies and grace don't keep us from sinfulness God will prevail against us as His children...and those who are His will be brought back...and those who are not...will not for they were never part of the family after all.**
    - **When we do persist in our sinfulness we are giving testimony to our lack of faith...which is an open rejection of God and all that He has done for us...**
  - **Therefore they shall be punished...**
    - **Because their sin dishonors God's glory...they only have one job...glorify God....they, His own people, are an affront to Him...more than any other people in the whole world ...simply because they should know better concerning how intimate God has been with them.**
    - **Because God will vindicate His own honor...as it has been said, *"Judgment begins at the house of God..."* Lev. 10:3; I Peter 4:17 He holds His people more accountable so He will punish them more severely...making an example of us to bring His own back to Him But also to purge the Church of those who don't belong.**

2. Now what is going on in verses 3-6?

- a. **These questions are to let them know not to expect any comfortable communion with God going forward unless they repent of their sins. And those who do will be saved.**

**b. They are rhetorical questions...all to be understood as answered in the negative.**

**(1) Like: "Can two walk together, unless they have agreed to meet...or simply...be agreed?" the answer is "No". It is NO for a couple of reasons:**

- Can people walk together if they have not talked about where to meet...what road to take...where they will walk to...how long they will be gone? Without agreement on these things they cannot be thought to walk together if neither one knows the answers to these simple directions.**
- But then there is the question of simply "being in agreement"... In that, Are we of one accord on the basics of life and faith as defined by God and His Word? ...if not we will not find communion with such a person and probably shouldn't be walking with them in the first place...to be seen with one who rejects the Word a lot, places our witness in jeopardy. See II Cor. 6:14-15.**
- The design of these words is to show that without true friendship, defined by God, there can be no true fellowship...as these people were not God's friends at present, they had rejected His Word...they had broken the Covenant and yet they expected Him to walk with them simply because they said so...but God is telling them they should not expect His fellowship with them any longer. God could not and would not be walking with them going forward. To walk with God requires agreement with God and His Word...no agreement, which is seen in behavior, no fellowship/communion.**

**(2) Vs 4. – God does not roar and there not be any reason for it...just like a lion, generally will not roar unless he has reason. God does not make idle threats and then does nothing about them...God doesn't act like a boy crying wolf...God does what He says He will do...it will be done!**

**(3) The rest make the point clear...without repentance they will not have communion with God going forward....and these judgments will fall and continue until they have had their affect...restoring God's own...purging those who aren't his.**

**3. What is God now saying to them in verses 7-8?**

**a. Vs. 7-**

**(1) While He will no longer be in communion with His people because of all their sinfulness, He will not speak to them any longer, but**

**(2) By God's grace, because of His promises to them...his mercy and grace towards them...**

- He tells His will to His people ahead of time through men He has called and can trust to tell the truth to His people....the prophets. Gen. 18:17 tells how far back this goes. John 15:15 speaks of how God sees His true Church now and how He has enabled us to know all things that we can know...thus confirming Deut. 29:29.**



- **If they are not HIS prophets they have not heard and will not believe...hence false prophets.**
- **And with these words He is also saying that He/God will deal with anyone who have contempt for His prophets. Don't wrongly mess with the things of God.**

b. Vs.8-

**(1) God has spoken so who wouldn't fear...**

- **When a lion roars in real life it gets every ones attention...everyone wants to know where it is...which way it is traveling...what prey is it looking at that has caused it to roar...is it us? Because it is an animal that demands respect in the wild.**
- **It is said that the lion roars before he tears his prey to shreds...**
  - **So God warns before He wounds.**
  - **But He is also painting a picture of all that they will lose. The lion shreds his food...is an image that everything they hold dear being taken from them ...shredded from them, if you will.**
- **All will fear when God speaks, except those who are not His...the foolish...they will simply double down in their sin bringing more and more judgment upon themselves.**
- **The lion has roared...Lion of Judah perhaps! See Amos 1:2; Hosea 5:14.**

**(2) The Lord has spoken; who can but prophesy?**

- **God's prophets have no choice... they must prophesy...in the same way everyone must fear when God speaks....or a lion roars. Like Moses: He came down from the mountain reflecting God's glory before the people...**
- **They cannot keep it shut up but must speak...See Jer. 20:8-9; Acts 4:20.**
- **They must speak only what God has said to them to speak.**
- **Urgency and necessity was laid upon them to get God's Word out...in the same way it is laid upon ministers of the gospel today to get the WORD, God's Word out. See I Cor. 9:16, 14:3.**

4. Interesting what God is doing now in these latter verses, 9-15. What would you say are the messages presented here?

a. Vs. 9-God tells His prophets to give notice to Israel's neighbors concerning their own conviction and condemnation.

**(1) To Ashdod...a chief city of the Philistines...a long time enemy.**

**(2) But even further...to the palaces of Egypt...**

**(3) He calls these leaders to come and witness the trial and the judgment from the mountains of Samaria to see (Is. 7:9):**

- **The disturbances within Israel...Israel's growing weak...Amos 2:13-16**
- **How their own people treat one another in these last days...mobs committing all sorts of atrocities to save themselves...**

- Why would God want to put on this show for Israel's enemies?
  - **God does not fear the scrutiny of even His enemies for His ways are always just and these people will see and affirm that God's ways are equitable.**
  - **As a warning, for if judgment begins with the house of God, what shall be the end of those who are strangers to Him?**
- b. In verse 10 God reveals the very nature of these people. *"They do not know how to do right (they do not execute the law= God's law), those who store up violence and robbery in their strongholds."* What does that look like in our current day and age?
  - (1) These are people who claim to be Christians who basically live for themselves...protect themselves and do not seek the good of others.**
  - (2) These are particularly vicious in that it is obvious that they know better...either morally or spiritually but still choose to do what they want...Christians in word but not in deed???**
  - (3) These are obviously NOT believers...their fruit proves that.**
- c. Vs. 11- God is sending Assyria to do His bidding...to execute His judgment.
- d. Vs. 12, is an interesting verse. What would you say He is communicating here?
  - (1) Grace.**
  - (2) An almost complete destruction of Israel...but not complete for there will be a remnant (body parts) that will be rescued out of the lions mouth...Rev. 7- Ephraim is not listed there, but other tribes of the north are.**
  - (3) "...corner of a couch and part of a bed."**
    - **This is an unusual phrase for us, but...When God's judgment comes to these people it will be vanity to think of escaping the judgment. Some might try to take refuge "in the corner of a couch and part of the bed"...or we might say "under the bed"...this is a picture of a vain refuge...**
    - **It is also considered a place of sensuality...so they are seeking refuge in all the wrong places to be sure.**
    - **They falsely believe they are safe and secure and acting in secret...falsely at ease...**
    - **But when God comes He will take away all the pretense of their "security blanket".**
    - **Those who don't take action at the first sign of distress but lazily wait on their couches or lounging in their beds will be the first taken hostage... *"the great houses shall come to an end."***
    - **Everything they once held dear ...position, power, wealth...will all be taken from them.**
- e. Vs. 13-15- Notice is now given to Israel itself.
  - (1) Vs. 13- "Let this be testified too...let this be heard, against the house of Jacob..."**
    - **The prophets will be declaring this to the people...God's coming judgment.**
    - **Like a town crier...when he speaks everyone listens. Because what he has to say will affect all the people of the land.**
    - **And this declaration comes from The Sovereign Majestic One, the Sovereign/ Commander-in-Chief over His Armies.**

**(2) Vs. 14-**

- **On the day I punish Israel- the day of Assyria being let loose on them**
- **On that day God will not forget their sins....and their idolatry...Amos 2:8 and many other places in the prophets.**
- **God will also visit/punish Bethel...where one of the 2 calves of Jeroboam was set up as a place of worship. (The other was in Dan.)- I Kings 12:26-33. Ephraim (Bethel was in Ephraim) and Dan neither one are listed in the list in Rev. 7.**
- **These were copies/counterfeits of the Ark of the Covenant, but they will be entirely demolished by the Assyrians in God's wrath against them and their idolatry.**
- **But this also talks about punishing all those who worshiped and serve at the altars as well. God always punishes the false teachers/prophets/priests for leading His people astray. The people are culpable as well for their being led astray but God will hold those who lead them astray more responsible for taking His name in vain...for the honor of His name He will deal with them according to His word.**

**(3) Vs. 15-**

- **Nothing will remain of the false securities. It will hit the cities (the winter houses) and the country (summer houses) where these houses were. All their wealth will not protect them...nothing will remain of their possessions.**
- **War is coming decreed by God against these people...this war will destroy and take away all their prized possessions. They were once God's possession but now they are no longer...and now all of their "stuff" will be destroyed or taken away.**
- **"...Houses of ivory..." -elephant tusks is the actual word. Ahab had covered a house he built with ivory- I Kings 22:39...so it would have been assumed others would have as well...as a sign of the opulence and total lack of concern for the poor in their nation.**
- **All the ruling families will be done away with...**
  - **Great houses can be a further reference to the rich and powerful losing everything of value of which their palaces would definitely fall into that category. Everyone that built such a house believed in it "immortality"...which would represent the strength and long life of the family name...like many of the great castles in Europe...their builders thought they would last forever and so wouldn't their houses/families.**
  - **But it could also mean all the ruling class...all those who considered themselves "higher- better"... those who had made themselves leaders...will be gone because of their unworthiness in God's eyes.**

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

February 20, 2019

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. Thinking about what we saw in chapter 4, what are some principles that we can glean from this teaching almost 3000 years later?
  - a. **We must obey God or die! (This came from one of our young one...it all seemed pretty clear to him!)**
  - b. **We must understand God sees through us and judges the intentions of our hearts**
  - c. **We must remember that God doesn't do anything that He doesn't tell us about beforehand. Our problem is we don't believe Him enough.**
  - d. **We must listen to the Word of the LORD.**
  - e. **We must only worship as He prescribes.**
  - f. **We must walk in His ways not our own.**
  - g. **We must take care of the poor in our midst.**
  - h. **We must not seek to show partiality or superiority over another.**
  - i. **We must repent and live...or don't repent and die eternally.- It is never a good thing when God says, "...prepare to meet your Maker...your God/Elohim, O Israel!" !"** Going to meet Him either way but one means life... the other wailing and gnashing of teeth.
  - j. **We must humble ourselves before our God and King and Father.**
2. What might God's discipline/warning signs look like today that show the world/our nation that it is going too far away from His established precepts?
3. Our nation is NOT the covenant nation (God's chosen people) but, the Church is; sooo... What might God's discipline/warning signs look like today that show the Church is going too far away from His established precepts and desires for her?

### C. Amos chapter 5:1-15

1. What specifically do we see again in the first part of the first verse yet again and why?
  - a. **"Hear this Word..." might as well be saying "Hear my Words of certain judgment that I bring against you again...still!"**
  - b. **When God speaks all people that on earth do dwell must listen! It is all created orders duty! It is also in our interest.**
  - c. **4 times in these last 2 chapters do we see God calling to Israel with His judgments against them to HEAR!...**
    - (1)3:1, 13
    - (2)4:1
    - (3)5:1
    - **Because as men they cannot or will not hear what God is saying to them.**
    - **But they are called, now, to give their full attention to them...like a prisoner standing before His accusers he is compelled to look and listen to the charges.**

- **In this case they are commanded by their KING and Judge and they must heed what He has to say...This is the Word of the LORD.**
2. What is meant by these words in verse 1, *"...that I take up over you in lamentations, O house of Israel:..."*?
    - a. **God would that no one would perish but because of His covenant conditions which cannot be broken...**
    - b. **After all these are His chosen children even if all of them aren't ..He had blessed them and loved them and even His remnant must now experience His wrath some more fully than others obviously.**
  3. How "fallen" are they according to verses 2-3?
    - a. **Vs. 2-**
      - (1) **"The virgin Israel" is not so subtle sarcasm/rebuke of Israel...for they are anything but a "virgin".**
      - (2) **"Forsaken on her land with none to raise her up."- she has been left by her lover and she can't get up. God has left her to her own devices and she is so drunk that she literally cannot get up out of her own way.**
      - (3) **The one who had been courted...the one who had been once a treasure to God...the one who had great strength and promise, in the LORD...has been left and discarded by the only one in her life that could make her beautiful again.**
      - (4) **She shall never return to her former dignity with God.**
    - b. **Vs. 3-**
      - (1) **1 person in 10 shall be left after God's judgment falls.**
      - (2) **God will reduce Israel by 90% only 10% remain to one day worship the LORD.**
      - (3) **Someone commented, and it is an interesting observation, that this is 10%...the tithe...and the observation came with a "wondering" of whether this was yet a subtle message from God that since they hadn't worshiped Him correctly given a true tithe that perhaps He has taking one...or in this case taking 90% and keeping the remaining 10% for Himself.**
  4. What does God promise His people in verses 4-7?
    - a. **Life if they would but seek Him.**
      - (1) **Seek NOT their idols.**
      - (2) **Seek NOT their own way.**
      - (3) **Seek NOT the way of the nations around them.**
    - b. **Judgment with the non-believers and false priest and prophets if they don't turn and repent.**
      - (1) **Bethel, Gilgal, Beersheba will all come to ruin...Gilgal will for sure be taken into exile...Bethel will be basically destroyed...and Beersheba doesn't even warrant being named in the judgment it will so complete.**
      - (2) **If they don't repent and seek him all Israel will be devoured all the way to and including Bethel...total and complete destruction of those who were once favored among the nations.**

- c. Now what is the problem? Why is this so hard for most of them?
- (1) Tears of putting away...not even considering God's Word as pertinent or commanded.**
  - (2) Years of perverted justice ...and perverted life style...lie become truth...truth becomes a lie...no absolute standards.**
  - (3) Years of idol worship...we have always done it that way.**
  - (4) Years of doing what is right in their own eyes.**
  - (5) Years of not seeking the LORD even in their rituals. They often went through the motions of worship but not to bring God glory but because they were Jews...or because it was what they always had done along with their other idol worship...the more gods the better.**
- d. 2 times God places a simple formula before the people that He had invested much into... *"Seek me and live...Seek Yahweh and live..."* What are some things that this communicates to you?
- (1) It is just that simple...maybe too simple for their "sophisticated and fashionable" lives...**
  - (2) God will is not so difficult in the final analysis...but it is impossible for all who are not His...all who have not been effectually called by God...His elect.**
  - (3) It is a pretty simple instruction but it goes against their default...their intuition...their conventional wisdom...their fallen nature. (See Deut. 30:1-20 [especially vs. 11-20]; II Chr. 15:1-6)**
- e. How does God define His people in verse 7? Why?
- (1) *"O You who turn justice to wormwood..."* Justice should be a blessing and it should be sweet because it is true....but these people have turn justice upside down for personal gain...for class superiority.**
  - (2) *"... and cast down righteousness to the earth."* They deplore the righteous acts of the righteous prophets and priests...because they deplore the Word of God...they are purposefully following unrighteousness because they know what righteousness looks like. Making falsehoods into truth and truth into falsehood to fit their paradigm...The "lie when the truth fits" just to keep from telling the truth...another way that they have fallen. See Rom. 1:19-23, 32.**

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

February 27, 2019

### A. Prayer

### B. Review- Amos 5:1-7

1. Re-read vss.1-7. How would you put these verses in your own words for them?
2. In Verses 5 and 6 we see that God 2 times places a simple formula before the people that He had invested much into... *"Seek me and live...Seek Yahweh and live..."* What are some things that this communicates to you?
  - a. **It is just that simple...maybe too simple for their "sophisticated and fashionable" lives...**
  - b. **God will is not so difficult in the final analysis...but it is impossible for all who are not His...all who have not been effectually called by God...His elect.**
  - c. **It is a pretty simple instruction but it goes against their default...their intuition...their conventional wisdom...their fallen nature. (See Deut. 30:1-20 [especially vs. 11-20]; II Chr. 15:1-6)**
3. How does God define His people in verse 7? Why?
  - a. ***"O You who turn justice to wormwood..."* Justice should be a blessing and it should be sweet because it is true....but these people have turn justice upside down for personal gain...for class superiority.**
  - b. ***"... and cast down righteousness to the earth."* They deplore the righteous acts of the righteous prophets and priests...because they deplore the Word of God...they are purposefully following unrighteousness because they know what righteousness looks like. Making falsehoods into truth and truth into falsehood to fit their paradigm...The "lie when the truth fits" just to keep from telling the truth...another way that they have fallen. See Rom. 1:19-23, 32.**

### C. Amos 5:8-15

5. What all is He communicating to these "fallen" people in verses 8-9?
  - a. **Look at His power- the Pleiades and the Orion= constellations of stars= equals the whole universe.**
  - b. **This one who has the power to take away even the dark night of our souls but can also send us into darkness even in the middle of the day.**
  - c. **He who has "made", "turns" and "pours" has the power to carry out His curses/judgements that he originally said would come to pass for all covenant breakers.**
  - d. **See Job 9:1-9; Isaiah 44:24-28**
  - e. ***"...the LORD is His name; who makes destruction..."***
    - (1)**No one can contend with such a God as this! It is our duty...the elects duty and interest to stay at peace with this God. Through Christ we have peace with God. Christ made peace because we could not so now that we are in Christ we have peace with God.**
    - (2)**It is good to have Him as a friend...so let us stay humble before Him...for the LORD is His Name.**

6. Now let's look at verses 10-12.
  - a. **Don't let the "they's" and the "you's" throw you He is talking about the same people...all who have been and are opposing His Word...His Truth. Literature at this time was written this way where shifts in like this simply represented all y'all!**
  - b. **There is a long and ugly list of charges here to be sure.**
    - (1) They abhor those who bring the truth to bear on society...even those who simply speak the truth for God.**
    - (2) They misuse and abuse the poor in their midst...which is always true when there are only 2 classes of people in a society...**
    - (3) They were more focused on building their wealth like the Canaanites before them and God will take all of it away from them just like He did the Canaanites.**
      - The Canaanites had fine houses and fortified cities...God took it from them and gave them to the children of Israel.**
      - They had wonderful vines and fruitful fruit trees...but God took them from them**
      - Just as He will do to the Israelites because of their sin against Him.**
    - (4) Their officials take brides**
    - (5) They hassle the righteous to the point of them being ostracized.**
    - (6) They turn away the needy at the gate.**
    - (7) And on and on and on and on go their lists of sins.**
7. Look closely at verse 13, a minute. The "prudent" are usually considered those who are wise in the LORD. (See Proverbs.) So if this is true, what is God asking these people to do? **Not to share the good news of repentance...**
  - a. First of all, which people is he talking to here in this verse? **The remnant He has been talking about throughout...the one he specifically references in verse 15.**
  - b. Why would God do this?
    - (1) The time of judgment has come...their time is up in other words. His people need to prepare to be carted off. The word is still going out...a word of judgment.**
    - (2) Most agree that this did not apply to the true prophets of God who were in fact commanded to tell these things to this people who would reject what they had to say, mock what they had to say, abuse them, persecute them, and kill them.**
    - (3) It is a waste of time...God's judgment is coming...if what He has to say isn't enough... nothing will be. A sad commentary on how far these people have fallen ...so fallen that they are not worth the breath of His true people...or the hassle that it will cause them.**
    - (4) Now is not the time to complain to corrupt officials, you are only bringing suffering onto yourself...send your complaints to God.**
    - (5) Now is not the time to share for it will only bring anger and ill will on God's people as they prepare to leave to go into exile.**
  - c. **They are not even to speak ill of these people....**
  - d. **Another caveat to this however is that they may have been, also, being commanded not to even pray for these folks any more... evidently the grammar allows for this train of thought.**



- e. ***“...for it is an evil time.”...seems to sum up why God would tell them to be silent.***
8. After all of this, what is He telling them once again in verses 14-15? Why?
    - a. **Sooo...what is “good”? See Matt. 19:16-26...what is good is what brings God glory...love the Lord with all that we are and our neighbor as ourselves.**
    - b. **John 17:3-10- knowing God is life!**
    - c. **So repent and be changed and participate in the blessings of God rather than the coming judgments.**
    - d. **Vs. 15- *“...it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.”* We see most all the tribes registered in the list in Rev. 7 which tells us that they will be among every tribe, tongue and people that God will call forth His people from... Romans 9-11 basically guarantees that while all God’s elect are the Israel of God there will be actual Jews that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ that will be saved as well... the gospel is for those among the Jews and the Gentile who will believe.**
  9. Looking back over these last 15 verses, again what would you say is the message to us today?

**D. Amos 5:16-27**

1. When you look at verses 16-17, what would you say is the point?
  - a. **There will be wailing!**
  - b. **There is to be so much wailing that they call out those paid to wail... *“skilled in lamentations”... to wail.***
  - c. **Everyone will wail...everyone will be affected.**
  - d. **Why are they wailing specifically according to the text? *“...for I will pass through your midst, says the LORD.”***
    - (1) **Same language as that concerning the death of the first born in Egypt.**
    - (2) **It is clear the “death angel” is coming for them (5:3)...he will not pass over them any longer. God will “pass through” not “over” then meting out judgment in His path...**
    - (3) **The language even seems to suggest God’s personal involvement in doing this to them....Death angel...Assyria...God’s direct intervention...all of it is God’s doing one way or another.**
2. Who is speaking in verses 18-20? Amos! What is he saying to these people?
  - a. **Vs. 18- There are those who are so hardened in their heart that they mock this end that has been described...saying bring it on...bring your worst...not having a clue what that means and not caring since they have convinced themselves nothing of any real consequence is going to happen.**
    - (1) ***“Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!”* Woe to them who mock the LORD and question His Word of judgment.**

**(2) “Why would you have the day of the LORD?”- They do not know the depth of their own sin so it just doesn’t make sense that God would judge them. They have moved so far away from God and His Word they have no concept or they choose to have no recognition of the truth.**

**(3) They seemingly do not know what they are asking for when they even say to hasten the day of the LORD. It is sort of like people today that mock God with their words, lives and thoughts and then have the audacity to say God Bless America! Or...to pray for Christ’s return without any understanding of their own sin or what His return means especially for those who aren’t God’s!**

b. What is he communicating in verses 19-20?

**(1) They do not know and are not concerned about death. (See John 3:19-20)**

**(2) Not only are they not looking for it...as in preparing for it...it will also come swiftly before they can even have time to react...painfully and swiftly.**

**(3) In the dark you can’t see the lion to run from him...or if you run up on a bear...or in the dark you place your hand where a venomous snake is and you are bitten even before you know it is there.**

**(4) Also, if they escaped the lion and the bear and made it into their own...safe...home...where they would be at ease...yet , they would not see the venomous snake and they would be bitten and die...death is coming.**

**(5) The Day of the LORD once had a positive connotation...but not now...the Day of the LORD will be only darkness for the Israelite. There will be nothing but misery.**

- ***“Even very dark/gloom with no brightness in it”- absolutely no deliverance...not the least bit of glimmering hope or even the possibility of relief for the unbelieving Jew.***

- **Interesting reminders:**

- **On the day of Christ’s death darkness reigned...**

- **On the Day of the LORD when He returns ...everyone will know and see clearly what is going on.**

**(6) Bottom line- the prophet is saying- It is sheer madness to mock the Day of the LORD!**

3. Now God is speaking again in verses 21-27.

a. What is He telling them? And us?

b. Look at verse 24. Sound familiar? Given the context what would you say is being communicated with these often quoted verses?

**(1) That judgment is coming and it will come swiftly like water running over a water fall...nothing will stop God’s righteous justice in the same way that we can’t stop a stream at flood stage...No one can or will be saved by their own efforts...no one can resist...nothing stops flood waters until they run their course.**

**(2) Many say, hence much of the way it is taken today;**

- **Let there be a general repentance among you...a reformation. Let the due process of true faith and righteousness have their influence upon you. Let the land be water with justice and righteousness once again so that all unjust opposition is done away with.**
- **In particular let justice once again be demonstrated by the leadership...let this justice root out partiality and prejudice holding those parties to account that seek to stand opposed to God's law. Let this justice run like a mighty stream until all places are cleansed and all places receive the benefit of the life giving waters.**

**(3) Now...what do you think?**

- **I will stand by the first...given the context of this before it and after it.**
- **I can see the desire for the 2<sup>nd</sup>...but if it does happen it is not something that will transpire in this life but in the next...unless you are a post-millennialist.**

c. He finishes this chapter with 25-27. What is God now telling them?

**(1) A Rhetorical question in vs. 25...of which the answer is "no"!**

**(2) That he is taking them into exile among others who worship idols. Even beyond Damascus...into Babylon!**

**(3) If your gods do not include these 2 they will. Assyrian and Babylonian idols.**

**(4) Sikkuth= Molech (representing the Sun)..who they sacrifice their live children to.**

**(5) Kiyyun the star-god (Rephan- Acts 7:43) or Saturn**

**(6) Duet. 4:19**

**(7) Actually the Hebrew is a bit complicated in verses 26...It could be translated in such away for Amos to be talking about any number of gods that covers the main garden variety gods that focus on Sun, Moon and stars...Kiyyun, Molech, Sikkuth, Asher and your El the images of stars.**

**(8) Their own households gods "pocket idols" that they had made with their own hands...lucky coins...stones...crosses...saint medallions.**

**(9) They shall be required to bear on their shoulders these gods... *"you shall take up..."***

**4. With all this background, in a word or few how would you summarize Chapter 5? **Justice and Mercy!****

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

March 6, 2019

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. What 2 groups of people is God speaking to through the Prophet?
2. In a word or few how would you summarize Chapter 5? **Justice and Mercy!**

### C. Amos 6

1. Look at verses 1-6.
  - a. First of all, what catches us off guard in the very first statement?  
**(1) In our world and in there's as well...they/we would have expected "Happy/Blessed are those who are at ease."**  
**(2) That is the way of things as long as things are going well we rejoice in our blessing...prosperity has a tendency to foster laziness in faith and life in general.**
  - b. While God through the prophet is calling down "Woes" on them what are they doing? Just for fun...who are they? **Judah and Israel= Zion and Samaria.**
  - c. **Like Solomon of old..."they" those who are at ease in Zion...are unjust, gluttons, drunks, idolatrous and immoral. They do whatever it takes to satisfy their carnality...when they should be repenting and grieving over the ruin of Joseph.**  
**(1) "Those who are at ease in Zion..."**
    - **Think they are being blessed because of their prosperity at this time. Health and wealth gospel?**
    - **They have no concern for those who are not at ease.**
    - **God says "Woe" to them...calling down judgment that is coming.****(2) Because they are in Zion, not Samaria this is protection enough...Jerusalem is "impenetrable" in their minds.**  
**(3) Think Prov. 16:18-19.**
  - d. **They seem to be loading up pleasures as if addicted...live for today for tomorrow may never come.**
  - e. **They persisted in their wickedness with no thought of being held to account.**
  - f. **Even if judgment is coming it is so far away not to affect us...right now is all that matters. "It won't be us, next generation perhaps, but I won't be there to be bothered...today is all that matters." Think fable of the Ant and Grasshopper/Cicada**
2. Turn to Matthew 23.
  - a. What role is Jesus taking upon Himself here? **Prophet...but also Priest and King.**
  - b. How are these sets of woes similar in nature?  
**(1) Because they are at ease and willfully ignorant of their condition before God.**  
**(2) They added to the burden to the people.**  
**(3) Storing up wrath for themselves and the people who follow them.**

3. Now let's look at verses 7-14.

a. Specifically what is He saying in verse 7?

**(1) All those who ruled...that were "at ease" and those who lorded over others will now be the first slaves...for as much pleasure that they looked for in their pride they will receive that much affliction.**

**(2) This happened historically in both the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles they took the best and the brightest first to be slaves.**

- **This were the scholars.**
- **But it was also non-ruling royalty who would be trained to lead the government.**

**(3) The sentence is handed down...and it is for both Israel and Judah.**

**(4) God has a tendency to make His sentences clearly known...compare Isaiah 22:14.**

b. What is vs. 8 communicating?

**(1) Nothing will change God's will...absolutely nothing...for He has sworn by Himself...His name.**

**(2) In that vow it tells them briefly the why of His punishment.**

**(3) Look at 5:21...God not only hates Israel's worship...what else does He hate about these people? Isn't hate too harsh a word?**

c. Vs. 9 and 10 are interesting verses. What is being said here?

**(1) Whoever is left behind will suffer and most will die from:**

- **Famine,**
- **Pestilence- There will be rotting bodies in the streets...that brings with it its own disease and death. The water will be bad...food will be rotting by this time...**
- **Wild animals**
- **What else is coming from the LORD. If they are meant to die they will one way or another.... Think 5:19.**

**(2) Have to bury their own dead relative with no ceremony or service.**

- **"one's relative"= uncle in the Hebrew which also equals an older man...who was deemed not worthy of being a slave and missed the sword...but is still strong enough and wise enough that it is the older man burying the younger men.**
- **Then having touched the dead they can only yell in to see if there are any one else dead in the house.**
- **They are so careful...now...as to not invoke the LORD's name so they don't invoke it wrongly... interesting now that they are following the letter and the spirit of the law.**

**(3) These people are those who have been complaining about the providence and warning of God up to this point...rather than repenting.**

- **Now they are so shocked by what they have to do that it is setting in what has happened but some of them are wanting to blame God or question Him in some way for what has happened...they are the ones who would say "Why would a good god allow such a thing to occur to His people?" Rather than realize their own sinfulness and God's just justice they want to complain... "Can you believe this...I have to bury my own relative?"**

- **And others who are commanding them “Silence...God may hear you and do worse than He has done!”**
- d. Vs. 11-14...The judgment is struck...what doesn't die from the invading army, famine, pestilence and wild animals will die from what appears to be an earthquake...and those left in all the land north, south, east and west will wish they had died.
- (1)The whole creation shares in the iniquity...think Romans 8.**
  - (2)Even believers who remain in the midst will have to endure the exile and judgment...some will get carted off but some will end up staying...all will experience some form of God's judgment.**
  - (3)The people will rejoice or they will have confidence in Lo-debar=no-thing- “chance”, “fortune”, “luck”= no thing. All their successes and strength –“Karnaim=horns” will be taken away when they are captured so all that they have built will come to naught. This is dealing with what we call today “the self-made” person that will all disappear.**
  - (4)Judgment from the Assyrians is set...and they will have their way with Israel in every region of the country...north, south, east and west.**

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

March 13, 2019

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. In a word or few how would you summarize Chapter 6?

2. What does chapter 6 say to us today?

### C. Amos 7

1. In Amos's vision here in verses 1-3, what does the LORD show to Amos?

a. **That the LORD had begun firing up the locust...in fact it seems they were beginning their work of destruction and had just finished eating the grass of the land.**

b. **Just like Abraham and Moses before him, Amos seeks a momentary reprieve from God.**

(1) **Abraham with Sodom and Gomorrah... "if there is only 30 ...10 righteous people..."**

(2) **Moses, Ex. 32:31-34, prayed for the people in the wilderness...he didn't want God to start over with his progeny.**

(3) **God listen's to Amos and gives a reprieve...Pul, king of Assyria (Tiglath- Pileser III) did take a large sum of money from the treasury as blood money, if you will and then left for the time being. II Kings 15:19**

c. **Amos stands in the gap for these people...one more time.**

2. We see the next vision in verses 4-6. What does the LORD show Amos here?

a. **Judgment has begun...the "fire" is upon them.**

(1) **This could be a spiritual/political fire that was causing the "national conflict" among God's prophets and the false prophets. Both sides had great influence and political pull. See verse 10.**

(2) **This "fire" could be at devastating drought that brought with it the "heat" of the east wind that would burn up everything in its path.**

(3) **This could be lightning or the fiery destruction that He used on Sodom and Gomorrah.**

b. **Amos seeks yet another reprieve while this is going on.**

(1) **The Hebrew could be translated... *"Father forgive them and stop!"***

(2) **God once again listen's for the moment.**

c. **God is waiting as He always does to be gracious to the elect that are yet to come into the fold...none of His will ever be lost.**

d. **It is to God's glory that He is often long-suffering, that He allows for pardon...that He gives mercy to His people. It is always right to pray for reprieve until the time comes for the actual judgment to come.**

e. **As we will see, God is only putting off judgment for the moment...it is still going to happen...He swore by Himself to carry through with the judgment. He is doing these to allow for those who will repent ...at the last minute...to do so. He knows they will and He has ordained the time that all of this will happen. Remember 6:8**

3. Then we see yet another vision in verses 7-9. What does the LORD show Amos here?
  - a. **Actually it should read... *"Behold, the Lord was standing on the wall made with a plumb line with a plumb line in His hand..."***
    - (1) The people of Israel had been built upon God as their foundation...as a wall...firm and strong in the LORD....Their whole cultural structure was formed after God's Law....strong wall against falsehood.**
    - (2) But now God is standing on the wall as to crush the wall, to trample it down...not to support it any longer.**
  - b. God asks Amos what he sees...all he can see is the plumb line.
    - (1) God has measured them to see how "true" they are and found them wanting.**
    - (2) Isaiah put it this way when He said in Isaiah 28:17- *"And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plumb line; and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter."***
    - (3) The LORD will no longer "passover" their transgressions...He will no longer be long-suffering or patient with them.**
    - (4) Amos doesn't bother to ask God to hold off His judgment...he knows it is time.**
    - (5) The reign of the family of Jeroboam came to an end 1<sup>st</sup>. See II Kings 15:10.**
4. Now comes the "contest" between Amaziah and Amos. Verses 10-17. What do we learn from this exchange?
  - a. **Amaziah**
    - (1) "Sounds like those who conspired against Daniel"... even Christ.**
    - (2) A high priest of Baal and of the care of one of the 2 golden calves made by Jeroboam for the people to worship.**
    - (3) He may have also had some political power as in possibly being a lesser prince in the family of Jeroboam for he obviously had the ear or thought he had the ear of the king.**
    - (4) Had been told of the visions of Amos and was now instituting a strategy to seek to disgrace Amos before the king who has years early actually sought Amos' counsel.**
    - (5) Part of his plan is to lie to the king about a treasonous coup that Amos is fostering from where he lives in Judah. Just like the people did before Caesar's representative when they said that Jesus was king in place of Caesar.**
    - (6) He wants Amos' to stop prophesying because if people began to listen then he would lose his source of income and power...so did the idol makers of Paul in Ephesus because his preaching tended to spoil their business.**
    - (7) He even tells Amos to stay in his place and prophesy there... "earn your living in Judah" rather than flee away or go back to Judah (instead of the way the ESV translates vs.12) and don't prophecy in Bethel.**



**(8) No indication that Amos was anywhere near Bethel during all of this but that was the power of the Word...it seemed to be pressing in from all sides.**

**(9) This is a grand act of "Fake News"!**

**(10) No Good deed goes unpunished, however...after all Amos had sought God's mercy on the people during two recent beginnings of judgment.**

- b. History tells us that Jeroboam II took no action against Amos...that is why Amaziah commanded him to keep his words to himself. Since the king did nothing he had no jurisdiction to do anything civilly against Amos.**
- c. Amos had done his job with integrity and so well that the priest were "feeling the burn" if you will...anyone that seeks to stand for the Lord will be mocked and conspired against just because what he says is truth and the truth makes sinners uncomfortable.**
- d. Amos talks about his commission coming directly from God where did this priest get his commission? The LORD Himself gave me these words when I wasn't looking to do this job...I was happy growing my business but when God calls you must go and you must stand...think Paul...think Martin Luther before the Emperor at the Diet of Worms.**
- e. Amos says... "who are you to tell me not to prophesy...in fact, because you have said that...because you have lied after the LORD's anointed messenger...because you have sought the death of God's Prophet...because of these and countless other sins now I have a message directly from the LORD just for you. You will have to watch all of the listed events unfold in front of you ...**
  - (1) Your wife will become a prostitute...a choice that she will make to get bread, or to simply survive by collaborating with the enemy for things..**
  - (2) Your children will be killed in front of you by the sword.**
  - (3) All your possessions will be divided up.**
  - (4) After you have personally witnessed and experienced the pain of these you will die disgraced and discarded in Assyria...an unclean land...along with what is left of Israel.**
    - This was all fulfilled in the times of King Hoshea of Israel, by Shalmanassar King of Assyria- see II Kings 17:6.**
    - God fulfilled His judgment exactly as He said He would.**

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

March 27, 2019

Note: Bible Study had been cancelled on March the 20<sup>th</sup> because of sickness in the congregation.

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. What is God teaching Amos and the people concerning justice and mercy with the 3 visions that are dealt with in chapter 7?
  - a. **His justice against His rebellious people...this is certain! The time has come...there will be no reprieve from God's justice.**
  - b. **His mercy for the remnant...this is certain, as well. But they will have to go through the Exile...the hardship and God will bring them back just as He has promised.**
2. What does all of this communicate to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

### C. Amos chapter 8

1. Chapter 8:1-3- Yet another vision (there will be 5 in all – 7:1, 4, 7, 9:1-15), what does the LORD show to Amos and what does it mean?
  - a. ***“...a basket of summer fruit.” ... This has also been translated as “...this is the last of the summer fruit.”*** There is a play on words going on here.
    - (1) **The Hebrew word for “summer fruit” is “kitz”. Ready to eat but not the first fruit that will last longer if not eaten right away. This is the picture of an overly ripe basket of fruit. Eat now for tomorrow it will go to waste...eat now for tomorrow you die!**
    - (2) **The Hebrew word for “the end” is “ketz”. Vss. 2b, 4a**
    - (3) **So it is clear at least to the untrained mind that the harvest is in for the fruit is in the basket...the harvest is at its end.**
  - b. ***“Then the LORD said to me...”*** this is God signaling Amos that He is defining this image for him...the “summer fruit” symbolizes the end of His people in the Promised Land... for now. The “summer” is over...The nation is overly ripe ...this is a final harvest and then it is done!
  - c. Once again He says, ***“I will never again pass by them or over them.”***
    - (1) **God's presence is gone and they are left to themselves and to the enemies God is sending their way...**
    - (2) **They are “alone”.**
  - d. ***“The songs of the temple shall become wailings in that day.”*** Or as the note implies, ***“The songs of the palace shall become wailings...The singers of the palace shall wail.”*** (Chap. 5:16) or... ***“They shall wail, instead of song, in their houses, in that day”***...
    - (1) **If it is to be translated temple... (which both work)...it would be talking about the temple at Bethel rather than the palace in Samaria...but quite frankly it could be both.**
    - (2) **The people are surprised and dismayed that God would actually do as He said He would do.**
    - (3) **So they now set out to lament and cry out in grief...but to no end.**

e. **The end of verse 3 makes it clear that when the end comes it is going to be of a horrible nature...the scene will be beyond imagination.**

**(1) Everywhere will feel this loss...every house, palace, town and city, especially in Samaria...just like Egypt with the death of the first born of the land.**

**(2) There will be so many dead that there won't be time to bury everyone...so their bodies will have to be carted off like cord wood to keep pestilence at bay...but even this won't help.**

**(3) So they that are left can do nothing but wail...it is all they have left....except they are commanded to keep silent.**

- **See 6:10. They are not to say anything that would question God's action and providence...since this is righteously upon them...do not bring any more of God's wrath down upon us by wailing over stuff that is our fault.**
- **They are left to mourn in silence ...alone.**
- **This was all done by God's command!**

## **2. Chapter 8:4-10**

a. In verses 4-6 what is God once again doing?

**(1) He is once again laying out the reasons for His great wrath upon them.**

- **They have oppressed the poor- See Prov. 29:7...oppressed them to the point of their dying from lack of the basics.**
- **They constantly seeking to work on the Sabbaths and Festival days...in fact...according to Isaiah they did just that...there was nothing much that was sacred to them...The prophet is giving voice to what the people of the Northern Kingdom were saying since they were not under the same restrictions as Judah in their opinion.**
- **Injustice abounds in the market place...pricing the poor out of basic necessities...manipulating currency for gain for a few...and falsifying the balances...cheating on the weights or not being up front with those who are more ignorant...See Deut. 25:13-15; Ezek. 45:10.**
- **Driving people into indentured slavery to pay their debts or to have something for themselves and their families.**
- **Wouldn't sell the "good stuff" the good wheat to the poor and needy...only the worst chaff...that which is usually thrown away...totally abusing their brothers and sisters...yet another command violation.**

**(2) What are some equivalents that are occurring today in our culture?**

- **Lottery...in how its "promise" of a better life effects the poorest among us.**
- **Currency manipulation that always seems to benefit the riches in the world.**
- **Labor injustice...child labor...slave labor...**
- **Sex trafficking.**

- **Abortion/infanticide/euthanasia:**
    - **Killing the baby in utero out of convenience...and the government paying for this procedure.**
    - **Allowing a child to die because they have been the product of an abortion but lived through the procedure...or killing them because of a defect that the parent(s) don't want to deal with.**
    - **Killing off the weakest among us who contribute "nothing" measureable by society standards to the culture.**
    - **Physician assisted suicide...lying to people saying that have a "right to die" the way they want...or convincing them to do this for the good of their loved ones.**
  - **What a major change in our culture when we now are called upon to buy water...**
  - **Talking about the Sabbath/Lord's Day:**
    - **People choosing whenever and for whatever reason just to not go to church. Not really a whole lot of difference with these folks seeking to find a loop hole to be able to do commerce on the Sabbath...as Isaiah indicates that they did.**
    - **Abolishment of the "blue laws" in most of our culture.**
- b. What is going on here in verses 7-8?
- (1) God is swearing on the pride of Jacob...what is the pride of Jacob?**
- **The LORD of Glory.**
  - **So God is swearing upon Himself ...again.**
- (2) That He will never forget...and His memory...well it is long!**
- c. What is He promising in verses 9-10?
- (1) "On that day..."**
- **The day of destruction He has just talked about.**
  - **Decreed and prepared to carry out for the LORD declares it to be so.**
- (2) "I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight."**
- **A picture of how dark in the middle of day it will be causing fear and panic from all who are experiencing it.**
  - **Metaphorically the sun is going down on their prosperity...and all the favor God had shown them up to this point.**
  - **Yet another way of referring to the END!**
  - **Also, this passage may have a far fulfillment in mind at the crucifixion of our Lord when everything went dark at midday. See Matt. 27:45**
  - **Many things came to an end at Christ's crucifixion and resurrection:**
    - **The curtain of the Temple was torn in 2 so the temple was impure...especially the Holy of Holies.**
    - **What temple worship was left would come to an end when the actual temple was destroyed within 40 years of Jesus's death, resurrection and ascension.**

■ **The Romans would become more demanding because of all the unrest.**

■ **In fact many, even Jewish scholars and our ancient father's in the faith point to this prophecy as happening on the day of Jesus' crucifixion.**

**(3) As we have seen...God brings upon them the plagues like unto those He used in Egypt for they are no longer His people because of their idolatry, injustice and rejection of His Word.**

**(4) God controls all they hold dear and it will all be taken from them in one way or another. All their perceived "joy" in life will come to an end.**

**(5) The death and destruction will be sooo great that no one will want to celebrate and how can they when their only son... (actually) "1<sup>st</sup> born sons" will have been killed.**

3. What specific type of judgment is He talking about here in verses 11-14?

a. **A famine of the Word- God is not going to speak to His people!...not the first time this occurred...I Samuel 3:1 ...even Moses' Song in Deut. 32 looks to a day when this will be true.**

b. **Think Prov. 29:18**

1. **A famine of truth.**

2. **A spiritual famine that is so wide spread that it will be felt by all...believer and non-believer. (Think Dark Ages...think today where it is getting harder and harder to find God's Truth in the Church)**

3. **The prophets will be gone from the land during the Intertestamental period...so the Word while it will exist...it will only exist in pockets of the faithful. John the Baptist became a celebrity because God had seen fit to raise up another OT prophet among His people...a celebrity that is until they figured out what he was prophesying...like the prophets of old.**

4. **They go along day by day in their own delusion and then push comes to shove and they perceive God's judgment...and what do they do ... "seek the Word of the LORD" but they will not find it. It is too late.**

- **God has removed Himself from their presence**

- **They will look for prophets to tell them what to do and think but they will not find them or they will not "hear" them.**

- **They want a "loop hole"...the false prophets always gave them a pass...now they want the same thing ...at a time when they should be repenting.**

- **It is not as if God's word is unavailable to them...it still is if they had a true heart and could hear...but they don't.**

- **Even if they are desperately seeking God's word...seeking meaning for what is happening they are seeking it as a reaction against God's word...rather than in repentance for their sin.**

c. What would a modern day equivalent be of this description of young people in verse 13?

**(1) Privileged**

- (2) These are the Snow-flakes of their day**
- **Young people who have been given everything, who now are without knowledge, without direction, without any truth they shall faint...they shall fall into despair...**
  - **They are needing a “safe” places to live...needing drugs to cope with the confusion of life...when God is not part of their education they will faint away never to rise again...they will fall by their own anarchy.**
- d. Vs. 14 is interesting...because of their despair they:**
- (1) They will swear by the Calf/Guilt/Sin of Samaria...the calf in Bethel and the one in Dan...thinking that they might get relief, understanding, protection in an ideology...a religion... that is steeped in sin defined as sin by God the Shame of a people.**
  - (2) “As the way of Beersheba”- speaks to the pilgrimages that people were making to Dan to “find themselves”.**
  - (3) And in seeking to “find themselves”... “...they shall fall, and never rise again.” These people shall fall into the calamity, ruin and destruction that God has been proclaiming...proving the reason for His judgment.**
- e. We all too often in the Church today are secure...or at least “OK” with our ignorance of faith...we also think we are secure in our false piety...because if our faith is ignorant our piety will be as well. If our lives and our piety do not match up with God’s word we are lost.**

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

April 10, 2019

### D. Prayer

### E. Review

3. What is God teaching Amos and the people concerning the vision that are dealt with in chapters 7 and 8?
4. Why is a famine of God's Word so devastating? How is this seen in our day and age?

### F. Chapter 9

#### 1. 9:1-10

- a. Once again, *"I saw the LORD standing on the altar..."* (Remember 7:7) Why would He be standing on the altar?

**(1) To break it down as we will see.**

**(2) To prohibit all offerings from being made as a last minute plea... no more time!**

**(3) If the word should be translated "beside", as we see in our ESV translations what would the image be communicating?**

- **The priest possibly barring them from bringing their sacrifices at the last minute...times up!**

- **Then we have a picture of the LORD preparing to sacrifice the multitudes of victims in His judgment.**

- b. What is He communicating in the rest of verse 1?

**(1) That people will be buried under the ruins of their false religion.**

**(2) The building...the temple to their false gods... will crumble with last minute worshipers in place seeking their god to restrain the judgment. Think Samson's last righteous act!**

**(3) Those who aren't killed by the building collapsing on them will be killed by the sword. In other words...they will be crawling out of the building relieved that they weren't crushed to find an army standing their preparing to kill them. Remember Amos 5:18-20**

**(4) Those who have been predestined for this will suffer God's wrath as He has said.**

2. How does He prove His point in verses 2-10?

- a. **They cannot hide from God's judgement. Those who are destined for this end will find it as God directs. None destined to die as God commands will miss their appointment.**

- b. **If we are still unsure of this last statement...we have verse 4b, *"...and I will fix my eyes upon them for evil and not for good."*** Wait a minute, how does God do "evil"?

- c. Can it ever be a good thing to have the Lord God of Hosts opposed to you?

- d. **The LORD is able to make His word good. Nothing can or will stop the One who creates and the One who destroys as He has decreed. He does but touch the earth and it melts.** Think about this image a minute: Is this the way you view the LORD? Why or why not?

**(1) We don't have to ever view Him that way for we are His children.**

- (2) But at the same time we should have a vision similar in our head; think Revelation 1....why? So we don't take advantage and begin to presume.**
- e. He controls all things...nothing happens without His control... hurricane, tsunami, tornado, earthquake (see also 1:1, 8:8)...there is no such thing as a "natural disaster" as if it happened by chance or by "Mother Nature" being upset... or the power of Poseidon... all things are ordained by God so that we see the power of God and fall to our knees in repentance of our sin. (See Luke 13:1-5.)**
  - f. God compares His people to the Cushites in verse 7... I am convinced that it is never good to be compared to pagans...it is absolutely clear that the relationship between God and Israel has changed.**
  - g. Vs 8 and vs 4 are very similar in that nothing is going to get by the LORD.**
    - (1) Judgment will fall on the Israelites to the uttermost...from the ground up.**
    - (2) BUT...there will remain a remnant...**
    - (3) God sees the elect and the non-elect even in the midst of a sinful kingdom...Remember He saw Lot in the midst of Sodom and Gomorrah.**
    - (4) God's justice, God's sovereignty and His election are clearly seen in this verse.**
    - (5) Judgment suffering and affliction will be real for all people even for the elect...but all the sinners will be shaken out and killed... especially those who mock the LORD, like the ones who were in the false temple when it fell...those who say, "*Disaster shall not overtake or meet us.*" It WILL meet them and devour them...period!**
    - (6) What grace do you see in verse 10?**
      - There are still some that He sees as His people.**
      - The sinners in the midst of His people will be dealt with severely.**
      - God will keep His word...no matter how severe His providence it is comforting in the end to serve a God who always keeps His word.**
- 3. What is he promising in vss. 11-15?**
- (1) That the kings of Judah will be dealt with as well...the house of David will be judged as well and be laid waste for a time.**
  - (2) But then the Messiah will come...from the house of David as had been prophesied before.**
  - (3) The Church of the New Testament will be built from the ruins of the Old Testament Church. Even at the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15:12-20 saw this using this passage to show that God is taking a people out of every tribe and language to re-build His Church just as He has said all along.**
  - (4) It will rise from the ashes of the disobedience of the Jews...(See Rom. 11:11-ff) While the world stands God will always have His Church.**



- (5) Look at where believers will come from...even from a remnant of Edom some will be saved...the enemy of God and His people...elect from every nation tongue and tribe.**
- (6) God will bring His people back from exile and for a time they will be prosperous...but all of that looks forward to yet another Day...the Day of the LORD.**
- (7) They days is coming of spiritual blessing and such an abundance that the reaper can't keep up with the production...an exaggeration that speaks of the New Earth and the blessings that will be abundant and not hindered in any way.**
- (8) The kingdom of Christ will take such "deep roots" and be fed by the best water that it will never be uprooted completely. Because Christ lives the Church...the Israel of God...lives and will endure.**
- (9) The Church will grow and grow and then comes Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming.**

**G. Conclusions...**

1. If you were summarizing this book in a word or 2, what would you say!
2. Looking back over this prophecy what stands out to you that you may never had seen before?
3. Looking back over this prophecy what can you take with you that will affect your faith going forward?
4. Looking back over this prophecy how do these words help you to understand our times better and how we ought to respond to them?

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

April 17, 2019

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. If you were summarizing Amos in a word or 2, what would you say!
2. Thinking back over Amos how do the words of this prophecy help you to understand our times better and how we ought to respond to them?

### C. Hosea – chapter 1-3

#### 1. Introduction

- a. **Little is known of Hosea, except for his family name...son of Beeri...his name means “salvation”...similar in its meaning to the name Joshua and Yeshua/Jesus.**
  - b. **According to the opening lines Hosea prophesied throughout Jeroboam II's reign 790's-740's BC same time period as Amos, and Isaiah... while The Northern Kingdom was still in its prosperous time...a time of materialism. It seems that his ministry may have lasted close to 60 years.**
  - c. **This was a time where the people had begun to fall into syncretism... combining Baal worship with “their brand” of Yahweh worship which was never the true worship of God. Since they already had 2 of their own idols in their own version of Yahwism adding some more ...namely Baal...was no big deal to them.**
  - d. **It is speculated that since he has such extensive knowledge of the Northern Kingdom that he may have lived there. This is also affirmed because of the style of his writing and the use of particular words that can only be seen in the Hebrew that were common to the people of the Northern Kingdom.**
  - e. **The Jewish rabbi's believe him to be “of Israel...belonging to Israel”...living there and they also believe that this is the only book from a true prophet who lived there.**
2. Some want to think this whole thing is an allegory simply because they can't image God asking one of His faithful to marry such an unfaithful woman.
    - a. How could God ask such a believer...a true prophet of God...to do what He does here with Hosea?
      - (1)**John Calvin as well as others think that this is a type of allegory or a parable perhaps...but not God actually asking a believer to engage in sin.**
      - (2)**God's word does not use true allegory as a rule...and beside if it is an allegory the strength of the object lesson is lost in the story.**
        - **Allegory= a literary device like a story, a poem or a picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning or message...typically a moral or political one.**
        - **The Greek word connotes even more mystery surrounding the device for it means literally, “veiled language, figurative language”.**
        - **The problem with true allegory is that it assumes various levels of meaning...or many possible interpretations**

- **God doesn't use literary constructs that would allow for multiple interpretations or the need of extra-biblical wisdom to reveal some mystery.**
- **God does use symbolism, metaphor and parables but none of these represent a need or even an allowance for multiple interpretations...multiple applications...but only one interpretation to a Bible text. The literary devices that God uses are easy for everyone to understand and relate to if their hearts have been changed by the Spirit and given understand...the mystery then is hidden in plain sight for all the true believers to see and understand.**
- **Some, like Calvin, might say that this is a biblical allegory which doesn't follow the wider literary intent...like a parable it simply communicates judgment on the unbeliever and blessing on the believer. Well, the main reason why many theologians of today speak against allegory is because of its usual meaning and intent...giving rise to multiple interpretations of the Bible.**

**(3) However you may want to look at this; the main point is that this is an object lesson from God to the people of Israel and Judah. This book is not about Hosea...he is a trusted prophet being used by God to give a particular message...this is a real story and real people...that represent the greater people and their opposition to God in their idolatry.**

**(4) The Word of the LORD is seen pushing His prophets to the extreme to make His point.**

b. What might this say about how God might choose to use us?

**(1) God does not always lead His people in the way that we would naturally regard as a happy way filled with success. Jesus after all was called a "Man of Sorrows." Jesus would not have been defined as a success in His ministry by today's standards.**

**(2) God sometimes leads His people to do things or to experience afflictions that may put us in great distress...but it is in these that God accomplishes His greatest victories and brings the greatest joys...in our weakness we are strong in the LORD.**

**(3) It is not uncommon for God's people to suffer in their profession and their calling...i.e. missionaries, preachers, Christian persecution in general that saw more people persecuted and killed for their Christian faith in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century than in any other time.**

**3. In chapter 1:1-9 what is being illustrated? Israel's sin!**

a. What was Hosea's role in all of this?

**(1) He is called upon to marry a woman of life-long unfaithfulness knowing that she will be unfaithful...just like God placed His love on the Children of Israel knowing they would become unfaithful. – Obedience.**

**(2) He is called to suffering...as Gomer's husband he must bear and endure the shame, the mockery of marriage and the mocking from others because of this special calling given to him by God...a type of Christ for His beloved but flawed Bride.**

**(3) To show Israel her unfaithfulness to God.**

**(4) To illustrate God's love for them even in their unfaithfulness.**

b. How specifically does Gomer illustrate Israel's sin?

**(1) Gomer's name means "completion".**

- **That is, the filling up of the measure of idolatry or ripeness of consummate wickedness. Her name was indicative of the wholesale adultery of the kingdom she represented.**
- **Interesting that her father's name- Diblaim means "*double layers of grape cakes*" or... "*cakes of raisins*"(3:1) – the reference and the name indicates one given over completely to pleasures. It is out of this family that she becomes apparently a priestess to Baal which required her to do things that were against God's law.**

**(2) She is unfaithful to Hosea...in fact that has been her lifestyle. Just like the people of Israel...God's bride are unfaithful to Him.**

**(3) She leaves Hosea for another man and she goes from one to another until she is deserted and left destitute.**

**(4) Hosea comes and finds her by God's direction and purchases Her back from the slavery she had been sold into...for half/the price of a slave.**

c. How do the children's names communicate God's judgment on the people of Israel?

**(1) Jezreel= "God sows" or "God will scatter"- the first born of Hosea.**

- **Jezreel is often a place of blessing and fertility for the Valley of Jezreel was a beautiful and fertile valley between the mountain ranges of Samaria and Galilee...the site of Gideon's victory over the Midianites in Judges 6:33. (See Hosea 2:22).**
- **But it was also the town where Jehu came to power through a bloodbath (I Kings 21:1)...so God is going to punish the house of Jehu of which Jeroboam II is a part.**
- **And the valley became a place of judgment in 722 B.C. (II Kings 15:29). This is where Tiglath-Pileser conquers the Northern Kingdom so His name looks to that judgment.**
- **This ultimate punishment reflects the curses recorded in Lev. 26:17 and Deut. 28:25, 49-57.**

**(2) Lo-ruhamah= "unpitied" or "she has received no mercy"- 1<sup>st</sup> born daughter...**

- **The child's name signifies the imminent withdrawal of the mercy God had been showing to Israel through the years even in her unfaithfulness.**
- **Though He will remove His mercy from Israel...He promises His mercy to Jerusalem when Assyria comes attacking in 701 B.C. in spite of Judah's unfaithfulness as well...it just wasn't time for Judah's punishment yet.**

**(3) Lo-ammi= "not my people"- 3<sup>rd</sup> child, 2<sup>nd</sup> son.**

- **God denies their covenant position...calling them covenant breakers, in so many words.**
- **He cancels the covenant formula for them...made in Gen. 15, Ex. 6:7**
- **And the consequences will be...see Lev. 26:14-33- "*I am not I am to you any longer.*" The promised covenant consequences of a people who reject God over and over again.**

4. Chapter 2 actually begins in Chapter 1:10. What promises are made by God even in this paragraph from 1:10 through 2:1?
  - a. **The remnant...the covenant keepers, if you will... will be saved.**
  - b. **Israel and Judah will one day be combined:**
    - (1) **At their return from the Exile...a remnant from all the tribes will return.**
    - (2) **In Christ...where every nation, tongue and tribe of God's elect will be brought together.**
    - (3) **At the end where there will be no more distinctions of ethnicity.**
    - (4) **The names of judgment are reversed for God's elect.**
5. Chapter 2:2-13 is God's indictment against Israel using very graphic language to communicate just how bad their sin is/was. There was a time that they would have recognized this and turn to God from their shame...they knew...but they chose not to turn for their hearts had not been changed. Why this kind of language? **God had not yet dropped the final blow of judgment...so like graphic Abortion movies that end up changing the hearts and minds of people...God is giving yet another chance to those who are His to repent.**
6. What is Chapter 2:14-23 communicating and to whom is God communicating it?
  - a. **We see restoration...purification ...a changed person/people.**
  - b. **He loves her deeply so He restores her to the proper place before Him as His Bride. She is completely forgiven her transgressions.**
  - c. **The relationship is completely made new...she lovingly calls to Him- "My Husband!" Made new- because this is a relationship she could have had before but like Adam and Eve gave it up because her heart had not been changed...but now her heart has been made new and her delight in is the LORD...her husband.**
  - d. **The covenant is renewed with these people.**
  - e. **There is yet a vision of the New heaven and the New earth.**
7. What is the point of chapter 3?
  - a. **Since Hosea was called to marry a woman of temple prostitution...and now an adulterer as well...to show Israel their sinfulness before their God and Husband...he now is called by God to go find her at her lowest and redeem her...purchase her back at the price of a slave(Ex. 21:32) and choose to love her well. These physical signs were meant to show Israel...especially the elect there of the depth of God's love...and the length to which He would go to redeem His Bride back.**
  - b. **A type of the depth, length and width of God's love through the death of His Only Son on the Cross to redeem God's elect ...In love He predestined US for adoption through Jesus Christ....we are redeemed by His blood alone.**
  - c. **The command to Hosea is to love the unlovable, the vile...those who don't seem to deserve to be loved...us!**
  - d. **In and if himself as a prophet and a man of integrity he would have been repulsed by such a woman. This shows us the difference in God's love and ours.**

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

April 24, 2019

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. If you were to sum up some of the specifics of Chapters 1-3 what would you say?
2. What do these specifics communicate to us today...almost 3000 years later?

### C. Hosea 4-

1. In verse 1 Hosea is the mouthpiece of God to call God's people to repentance...to call His wayward bride to return home...just like Hosea was called upon to do....Like Gomer we won't come home unless or until we have been purchased and owned...Christ went to the Cross and purchased/redeemed us with His blood *"...while were still sinners, Christ died for us."*
2. According to Hosea 4:1-3, what is the Lord's controversy/charge against them?
  - a. **No faithfulness.**
  - b. **No steadfast love...no covenant love.**
  - c. **No knowledge of God in the land.**
  - d. **There is:**
    - (1) **Swearing,**
    - (2) **Lying,**
    - (3) **Stealing**
    - (4) **Adultery**
    - (5) **Breaking of all familial and societal bonds.**
    - (6) **Bloodshed after bloodshed.**
  - e. What has been the main influencer of this change according to this small section?- **Idolatry!**
3. According to the whole of Chapter 4 in what ways has idolatry been so devastating for Israel?
  - a. According to vss. 1-9
    - (1) **Their national religion was based in idol worship...their form of Yahwism was base in 2 golden calves...two places of worship established by a man Jeroboam I ...so that God's people would be divided in faith and in family.**
    - (2) **Having chosen to walk away from "home" from God...like Gomer...look at the devastation that occurs in the life of God's chosen bride that plays the harlot with other nations.**
    - (3) **"The land mourns..." think Romans 8...because of our sinfulness the land pays the price looking forward to "the Redemption"...to that Day when Christ comes and makes all things new.**
    - (4) **They have become complacent with the false teachers and priests no longer contending with them because they have lost confidence in them and the whole system.**

- (5) The false prophets and priests redefined God's Word and the people are so caught up in their own pleasures and work that they don't care... They are going to do as they please anyway...in their eyes it may have been good that the established religion was accepting/condoning and even "preaching" that their chosen lifestyle was acceptable.**
  - (6) So the people are without adequate spiritual leaders...without a shepherd...and they have "no revelation" to live on.**
  - (7) Without God's Word the destruction of family and culture follows naturally- See Proverbs 29:18. God and God's Word is crucial for family and societal stability.**
  - (8) Verse 7 almost seems to indicate that the main idol was prosperity. Remember through most of Jeroboam II reigns they were extremely prosperous...just like many of the nations around them so the more wealth they had the less they needed "religion".**
- b. Vs. 12- 19
- (1) No one will be spared God's wrath...no one that is supposed to, that is.**
  - (2) These verses show to the degree that people will go to have their own religion.**
  - (3) To convince themselves of the "rightness" of their ways. They do everything else but and so their senses are dulled to the truth... harlotry, wine and new wine (much wine) are used to dull their senses so they don't have to deal with the realities of life.**
  - (4) In vs. 12- These walking staffs were like mini Asherah poles and they would pray to them...talk to them ...seeking guidance...or confirmation for what they wanted to do. And then to use them to prop themselves up as well!**
  - (5) When they sought to be religious they did so wherever they found themselves... "We can worship in nature....on a boat...in the blind. In fact, that seems better any way. This is a good place for this is where I am most comforted from the world and any one judging me..."their shade is good."-vs.13**
  - (6) Just like in Romans 1 God gives them over to their sinfulness as He has left them to their own devices.**
  - (7) Vs. 19 looks to the eventual...around the corner Exile...This wind of idolatry has wrapped them in its wings so tightly and they will be taken away to a land whose idolatry is even worse than theirs, if that is possible...where many of their eyes will be opened by their shame. It is at this time that the eyes of God's elect will be opened and they will recognize their sin. Only then will they turn back.**

#### D. Hosea 5

1. Where specifically do we see God sounding the alarm against His people in this chapter?
  - a. **Vss. 5:1-2,3a,4a,8-11**
  - b. **All Israel is called upon to come before their God...the divine Judge and hear the charges, yet again by God which substantiate His actions.**
  - c. **God has always promised that covenant breakers would be punished.**

- d. **All the people are called...for all have in some way contributed to the national guilt...by actually participating in the idolatry, injustices, and other sins that God has laid out ...or by tolerating them...by not holding one another accountable to God's standard for holiness...Think Lot.**
  - e. **With all the people being indicted no one can blame others...like the priest...for their own sinfulness.**
  - f. **God's is very specific in the sins He sees so they know that He is not dealing with generalities:**
    - (1) **In verse 1 we see the references to Mizpah and a net spread upon Tabor. Very specific areas used in a sting operation.**
    - (2) **Historically this was one of the places where believers or those seeking to flee the coming judgment would seek to cross over into Judah**
    - (3) **The government had set up spies and enforcement officers to capture them and bring them back ...forcing them to recant and to worship the gods of Israel...persecuting believers and being harsh on the poor. All would be held accountable for even the slightest involvement.**
    - (4) **He speaks to the children bred from pagan marriages...so he is also speaking of their day to day that is influenced by these things.**
    - (5) **He knows of their specific worship practices that will come back and bite them for they are abhorrent to the LORD.**
    - (6) **God even knows of the priests breaking the Law by moving the landmarks so that they might travel on the Sabbath. Interesting that they even cared...but there was so much about keeping up appearances of at least a religion that looked like the true religion. A counterfeit religion...something that the devil and our fallen nature love.**
2. **Why is Judah focused on here as well?**
- a. **See Amos 2:4-5**
  - b. **"in a little while...God will come for Judah as well for they are sinning just like their brothers and sisters in the North but because of God's patience and the open belief of many in Judah His hand is stayed for now...but it is coming...Israel is not alone in its sinfulness toward it Bridegroom.**
  - c. **In Vs. 15, the expectation ..the plan is...that they will be returned from Exile and God will once again be their God and they His people.**
  - d. **Vs. 15, also gives us hope in God's promises that God's people will return from exile by God's grace and mercy. They will acknowledge their guilt and earnestly seek His face again in repentance and he will "deliver" them back to the land ...a much diminished land under the rule of others but back none the less.**

#### **E. Hosea 6**

- 1. **Read 6:1-11. What is going on here?**
  - a. **They seeming are taking His call seriously. Vs. 1-3**
  - b. **The people are making a case to return to the LORD. They TALK about returning to the Lord.**



- c. **Or...is this the prophet, Hosea, calling his people to repent?**
    - (1) To return from their pleasures/idolatry.**
    - (2) To return to the Lord as opposed to foreign kings that they are dependent upon.**
    - (3) Hosea may be, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, heralding the deliverance of at least the elect of Israel at this time...looking forward to the fuller deliverance that will come through Christ.**
  - d. **Or...is this perhaps the remnant realizing their sin and seeking to once again be Coram Deo...before the face of God.**
    - (1) Matthew Henry says of this possibility, “When God designs mercy for His own, He gives them a heart to know Him.”**
    - (2) Those who turn back to God ought to do everything in the power given them by the Spirit to continually seek the LORD.**
  - e. **BUT...God reveals their heart... “Your love is like a morning cloud...like the dew that goes away”...it will dissipate shortly enough...even if He was to accept their weak repentance...nothing else has worked so let’s try this until everything gets back to normal.**
  - f. **In Vs. 6, what is God communicating that we need to hear as well?**
  - g. **Vs. 7-10 reveal the heart of the most of the people as well. This is like the seed thrown among the rocks... in the Parable of the Sower.**
  - h. **The “horrible thing” of verse 10 is talking about the idolatry... specifically the golden calves.**
  - i. **Concerning verse 11...it could be interpreted 2 ways.**
    - (1) The judgment ...the harvest is coming upon Judah and then God will restore her fortunes...as in when they return from Exile...and then more appropriately when Christ comes.**
    - (2) “But, O Judah, a harvest of joy is set for you by me when I returned my people from the captivity.”- Highlighting the grace and mercy that will be shown to them when they return to the land.**
2. **What point specifically is God making through the prophet in 6:6?**
- a. **Going through the motions is not true faith.**
  - b. **Without a changed heart you are just a clanging cymbal a resounding gong...or in the words of Jesus to those who say they did all the right things for the right reasons... “I never knew you!”**
  - c. **Having a changed heart and delighting in worship based on the knowledge of who God is and what He has done and what He expects of His people is what God wants of us.**
  - d. **See Micah 6:6-8; Rev. 1:7**

**F. Chapter 7 (can read)**

- 1. **In verse 1-2 we read, “When I would heal Israel, the iniquity of Ephraim is revealed...” What is he communicating here in verses 1-2?**
  - a. **God emphasizes with this first line that he had made known how they could be healed through His prophet...He constantly makes His way known just like today...no one has an excuse.**
  - b. **When people perish they can’t and they won’t blame God when they stand in front of Him...since He gave sufficient information...but He will be seen as just even in His choice... “Every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess...”**

- c. **It is God's sovereign right to choose His people but all are held responsible as well.**
  - d. **Their deeds are before His face...He doesn't miss a trick! And they will be judged accordingly...This is one of those times that you don't want your deeds stacked up before the face of God...this is like the Great White Throne judgement.**
2. Do we learn anything more about Israel's sin from the rest of the chapter? If so, what?
- a. **We learn that their leaders condoned their sinful actions because it was paying off for them. Their interests are not on their duty but rather on greed, injustice and idolatry.**
  - b. **See Prov. 31:1-9, where the king's mother tells him not to do what these kings do.**
  - c. **Consider that contrast of vs. 7 and Malachi 4:1.**
  - d. **Ephraim does not distinguish itself from the nations.**
    - (1) **God does not tolerate mixing of His peoples with pagans. God had originally set them apart from the other nations as His chosen people.**
    - (2) **This was God's plan from the beginning that His people would not co-mingle with people of other faiths...this is not an injunction against ethnicity...so much as it is a mandate against religious mixing. There is obviously no problem with people of other ethnicities coming into the fold and even marrying into the fold as long as they took on God's faith as their faith...think Ruth.**
    - (3) **God does not tolerate the mixing and blending- syncretism- of the faith handed down. His Law is supreme and cannot be watered down or redefined unless we want to be judged by Him.**
  - e. **Twice in the last e chapters we read, *"The pride of Israel testifies to his face..."* (5:5 and 7:10)**
    - (1) **Their "pride" was to be in the LORD and the fact that He had chosen them from among all the nations of the world to be His own, but...**
    - (2) **Instead they were obsessed with dressing and acting like the rest of the world...they wanted to appear to be globalists rather than nationalists (using the language of the day)...but really the difference is spiritual not political...in that they were to be God's covenant people separate in faith from the rest of the world. Their pride was in how well they blended with the peoples around them rather than the Law of God.**
    - (3) **Also they prided themselves in "dealing with" the true prophets and their message in "protecting" their people from them.**
    - (4) **And God used their "pride" against them in every way...which could have brought them back to God if God had chosen for that to happen...at the very least when God showed them their "pride" it should have caused a moments of pause....but instead, *"...they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek Him, for all of this."***

**f. Verses 11-16- Principle: Those who do not abide by the mercy of God, must expect to be pursued by the justice of God.**

- (1) A straying cat only appears to stray aimlessly...actually they are never completely out of touch with their "home base"...same is true of these people they know what is right and true and they stay close but they go just far off the Way as to forge, in their mind, their own way.**
- (2) For they lie to God...which means they know the truth.**
- (3) They complain about the struggles which means for them they know that things could be better...have to have a standard or you really can't complain about what you don't know.**
- (4) They devised evil against Him...knowing God to a certain degree...their DNA tells them He is there yet they devise plans to seek to undermine Him...Satan knows God exists and yet He still tries to undermine God because he doesn't really know God.**
- (5) Because of their outward religiosity they will be judged as those who throw their sins into God's face in mockery.**

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

May 1, 2019

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. What is the dual theme that runs through this book as it does through all the Minor Prophets and actually much of the OT?
2. Now let's revisit chapter 7 just a minute. What do we learn about Israel's sin in this chapter?
  - a. **In Verse 3, we learn that their leaders condoned their sinful actions because it was paying off for them. Their interests are not on their duty but rather on greed, injustice and idolatry.**
  - b. **In verse 5...See Prov. 31:1-9, where the king's mother tells him not to do what these kings do.**
  - c. **Consider that contrast of vs. 7 and Malachi 4:1.**
  - d. **In vs 8-Ephraim does not distinguish itself from the nations.**
    - (1) **God does not tolerate mixing of His peoples with pagans. God had originally set them apart from the other nations as His chosen people.**
    - (2) **This was God's plan from the beginning that His people would not co-mingle with people of other faiths...this is not an injunction against ethnicity...so much as it is a mandate against religious mixing. There is obviously no problem with people of other ethnicities coming into the fold and even marrying into the fold as long as they took on God's faith as their faith...think Ruth.**
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  - (4) They devised evil against Him...knowing God to a certain degree...their DNA tells them He is there yet they devise plans to seek to undermine Him...Satan knows God exists and yet He still tries to undermine God because he doesn't really know God.**
- C. Chapter 8 (This chapter can be read)**
- 1. God commands the prophet "Set the trumpet to the roof of your mouth/lips!"**  
What is happening here in verses 1-3?
    - a. He is most likely using a shofar...the trumpet/rams horn that would have called the people to worship or a national celebration...but in this case sounds the alarm...judgment is at hand!**
    - b. So the prophet calls the people to once again hear the message and indictment of the LORD. He is, in God's name declaring war on a rebellious nation/people...who are no longer "His people".**
    - c. The Assyrians are on the way as God's judgment because they as a people have broken covenant with their God....and God must punish covenant breaking.**
    - d. Verse 3 says it all. They profess faith and covenant but their actions show that they lie!**
  - 2. When we consider the rest of the chapter what specific things jump out at you?**
    - a. God is still reminding them of the seed of some of their sin...wanting a king "like the nations around them"- vs. 4**
      - (1) I Sam. 8:5-8, 12:17**
      - (2) This was a breaking of the covenant that did in fact come back to haunt and judge them.**
      - (3) They cast off God for the nations around them...just like Adam and Eve cast off God after a "little" conversation with one serpent. Willingly giving up mercy for judgment.**
    - b. A very telling passage- "For they sow the wind and they shall reap the whirlwind."**
    - c. Constantly looking to other nations to help them...totally blind to the fact that they are to be separate from other nations. Vs. 10**
    - d. God never entertains the idea of mixing religious beliefs and practices as if all religions are equally valid before Him. Vs. 11-14**
    - e. In fact, He commands strict adherence to His Word and His ways so His people remain Holy unto Him.**
    - f. All this talk of idols causes me to wonder what are my idols?**

D. Chapters 9-10

1. 9:1 has God commanding them to do what? Why? **There is nothing to rejoice about! Another Peace! Peace! Scenario.**
  - a. **I often wish we would herald this today...**
    - (1)**As a people we celebrate in our pleasure...**
    - (2)**We celebrate our autonomy...our personal choices...**
    - (3)**But the reality is that there is nothing to rejoice about when we live our lives in opposition to God...our maker.**
  - b. **The things we "love" are useless and vain!**
  - c. **So God says...stop it...stop rejoicing...stop loving those things that are NOT lovely!**
2. With the continued indictments and coming judgment why not just bring judgment upon them now?
  - a. **They are His...well some of them are to be sure...**
  - b. **He is still revealing His grace and mercy by taking "so long" to drop the judgment.**
  - c. **They are left without excuse...how many times God tells them so that they might repent.**
  - d. **Answer was given: This is teachable moment. And I said. How since only those who are God's can be taught?**
    - (1) **His people will see that God keeps His promises:**
      - **Grace to his own.**
      - **Judgment on His enemies.**
      - **But also that He will discipline those He loves.**
      - **The difference between discipline and judgment...is that it is expected that His people will hear and repent and learn...where as those being judged only complain of how unfair it is and then go on sinning.**
    - (2) **God's people flourish best under persecution...when we MUST lean into Him.**
    - (3) **God uses the prophet to say exactly what will happen in time ...but hasn't happened yet... When the time comes ...time is up for those who are not His...just like when Jesus returns...time is up ...no chances after that.**
3. Chapter 10:1-2...what is God reflecting on here? (can read Chapter 10)
4. These 2 chapters are in many ways rehashing what God has already said...however, with that being said, What in these 2 chapters did you need more clarity on?
5. Most of these things seem to be talking about much of what we would call their national life...what are some things as a church that we should be repenting of?

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
May 8, 2019

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What have we learned so far from chapter 1-10 that is important for us to take into our day to day? **For Me:**
  - (1) **What are my idols?**
  - (2) **Am I spending enough time focused on the things that matter to God...which is anything He has us doing?**
  - (3) **Am I using my time effectively for the LORD?**

C. Chapter 11 and 12

1. God changes the language quite starkly. What is he communicating to them in verses 1-4?
  - a. **God had loved Israel.**
  - b. **He had called them from all the other nations.**
  - c. **He taught them to walk.**
  - d. **He led them in His kindness.**
  - e. **But they turn to the Baals- Jeroboam set up the 2 calves...Ahab instituted Baal worship.**
2. In Vss. 5-7? **The end and what the end looks like for them...Assyrian exile for some ...death and destruction for others...they will once again be slaves.**
3. Why such a speech in verses 8-11? What do we see about God's heart?
  - a. **He wished to have compassion of His children...but they weren't His children since they were covenant breakers.**
  - b. **Admah and Zeboiim- two cities that were destroyed completely with Sodom and Gomorrah....for the same sins.**
  - c. **But he will have His compassion on His own...elect...remnant.**
4. Chapter 12- Hosea 11:12 is actually the beginning of chapter 12 in the Hebrew Bible. What would you say is the main point of this chapter?
  - a. **God contrasts Israel with His "better" child if you will...who will later on suffer a similar fate though not the extent of the destruction as Israel.**
  - b. **God reminded Israel again of their history, recounting His faithfulness to them...going all the way back to Egypt...a pivotal point in their history. See vs. 4- Bethel at the time with Jacob became a holy place...but not any longer. God calls on them here to persevere as Jacob did.**
  - c. **He actually calls them to return...because that is what He does.** Once again, since God knows that they are not going to turn back to Him...since God knows that He is going to bring the destruction and exile upon these people just as He says He will...then what is the point to keep calling them out as if they could or would ever change? (This is the question of the

“Free Willers”...obviously He is waiting and hoping beyond hope...for them to make the right decision.)

- d. God equates them again with pagans...vs. 7- “a merchant”= A Canaanite.**
- e. He reminds them of all the prophets that He has sent to them beginning with Moses in verse 13... “a prophet”...interesting.**
- f. But they “forgot”...and as such, “... *his LORD will leave his bloodguilt on him...*”**
  - (1) Bloodguilt always attaches to the slayer and his family for generations if nothing is done...II Samuel 3:27-29; II Kings 9:25-26. The blood remains on his head and the head of his family...always guilty of murder.**
  - (2) This was also held up for the one who committed child sacrifice.**
  - (3) Deeds generate consequences and the sin of murder/child sacrifices in particular.**
  - (4) And a people can be guilty by association as well...”accessory to the fact” ...by hanging out with such people...by being proponents to oppression and persecution and murder, even though not actually carrying it out...See Joel 3:21.**
  - (5) So because Israel could not read the signs...or could not see or hear the Word of the LORD the LORD left him in His bloodguilt. The lack of true repentance leads to destruction.**

#### **D. Chapters 13**

1. Again what is the prophet doing in 13:1-11?

- a. Vs. 1-3- Once, the Prophet says that Ephraim had a powerful voice for God...but now he has a weak voice for Baal.**
  - (1) I say powerful because of the 2 words “trembling” and “exalted” and this speaks of both spiritually and politically.**
    - **Genesis 48:8-20- Jacob, when blessing the sons of Joseph, placed Ephraim ahead of the first born Manasseh. He was given the blessing of the first born thus making him greater than the older.**
    - **Numbers 13:1-3, 8, 16 and Joshua 1:1-6- Joshua, the leader of God’s people was from the tribe of Ephraim. God told Joshua that He would be with him as He was with Moses.**
    - **Jeroboam I- an Ephraimite servant of Solomon in fact the head manager of the forced labor. God told him he would rule over the 10 tribes of Israel and whatever else if he would only listen to God and walk in His ways. But instead he set up 2 golden calves.**
    - **Ahab was even worse than Jeroboam...for he set up the Baals.**
  - (2) I say weak...because the text talks guilt...which would bring shame ...which brings weakness of character, faith and ultimately position.**
  - (3) The rest of verses 2-3 speaks of their practice and influence with the idols...they “kissed the calves”...they kissed the idols offering up human sacrifices...literally...but also can mean they offered up their allegiance...their very lives for their idol.**
  - (4) God’s people are commanded to kiss the Son...Ps. 2:12.**



**(5) And in their sin they are nothing...they are as chaff or dew or smoke.**

b. Vss. 4-11

**(1) God seems to take over the conversation at this point...that is the prophet would be speaking in the first person for God....this will run through vs 15.**

**(2) Vs. 4 is the same as 12:9**

**(3) Which brings to mind that this whole section has been said before.**

- **God delivered them from Egypt**
- **God cared for them in the wilderness.**

**(4) But they forgot God...they got full and their heart was lifted up...chose to forget Him...so now vs. 8...confirming once again His final judgment will be swift and terrible.**

**(5) The ESV says, “He destroys you, O Israel”...and that could be Hosea speaking...but the Hebrew seems most easily translated as “I destroy you, O Israel...”**

**(6) Vs. 10-11 is a familiar time of sinfulness with King Saul...**

- **Which interestingly would have brought to mind their redemption in King David, if there were any sensitive to the Lord at this time.**
- **God was taking their “king” from them until a time of His choosing. Same scenario...in His wrath He takes their “king” but in his time He will provide another One...Jesus the Christ.**

2. As we look at this last section of 13...

a. Verses 13:12-16...again what is God communicating?

**(1) The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up...bundled all together like sheaves and placed in God’s memory... “...in store”... like a storeroom to be brought out at the proper time.**

**(2) The pains and sorrows associated with childbirth are often compared with afflictions, distresses, and calamities in Scripture...so there is a case to be made about what women suffer in childbirth...the Scriptures confirm it! ☺**

**(3) Ephraim is unwise...**

- **The proverbs clearly lay out the definition of an unwise son.**
  - **“A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.” Prov. 17:25**
  - **He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.” Prov. 10:5**
- **“Unwise”...one who takes no one’s counsel but his own or those of other fools. He doesn’t listen and take pause at God’s judgment even on His fathers of the faith...think Rehoboam. Unwise= fool!**
- **And this passage says he is stubborn...not presenting himself at the opening of the womb... a phrase for being stubborn.**

**(4) Vs. 15- 16**

- **In the Hebrew Bible verse 16 begins chapter 14, but it seems this time to fit better with the previous chapter in concluding the thought.**

- **There was a time that he flourished which meant to them that their god/gods was blessing them.**
  - **But the east wind cometh- God is coming in all His fury and wrath.**
  - **The signs of His wrath is:**
    - **The fountains shall dry up and the springs will be parched... seen this prophecy before...this also may refer to the numbers of children they were NOT having as well.**
    - **They will spend great amounts to buy water...to purchase influence...after all they have the money.**
    - **Samaria will bear her guilt...no repentance...God will not take it from her this time because of her total rebellion.**
    - **God will bring the sword and as He has described before there will be mass bloodshed.**
    - **And the atrocities of all atrocities will occur...this was a common practice in the world of men so that there would be no more Jews or any other people they didn't want "infecting" their society.**
  - **But this begs the question...how could God do such things?**
- b. Look at verse 14...How does this statement compare with its use in I Corinthians 15:50-58? Turn to I Corinthians 15:54-57**
- (1)The I Corinthian statement is a positive statement... the sting of death is removed by the death and resurrection of Christ for all who are His. See also II Tim. 1:10.**
- (2)But here in Hosea it is obviously a negative statement. God is not going to deliver most of them from death or Exile.**
- (3) "*Compassion is hidden from my eyes.*" The Hebrew word here could also be translated "Repentance".**

#### **E. Chapter 14**

1. In these first 3 verses what do we see God doing?
  - a. In verse 1 God is having His prophet to call on them to repent...yet again. "*Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God for you have stumbled because of your iniquity.*"**
    - (1)Return to what? - to the LORD their God... which means they know the One from whom they turned away and they knew how to return!**
      - **To the One from whom they have stopped worshiping correctly.**
      - **To the One that is far superior to their idols...**
      - **They know all of this...for you have to know where you are and where you are to return.**
    - (2)The ESV translates, "*...for you have stumbled...*" and it is okay...but I would prefer to translate it "*...for you have fallen by your iniquity.*" (Geneva Bible, possible Hebrew translation.)**
      - **Stumble and/or fallen can both indicate that it was a trip...a backsliding sort of thing...which is not what God has been communicating.**

- **On the other hand, He is also talking to His remnant, so it could also be seen as His speaking to those that He knows are His already.**
  - **In neither occasion though does either translation really diminish the sin.**
- b. In Verses 2-3 God is actually giving them a prayer to pray in their repentance. So that the genuine believers knows where the door is and how to go back through...return.**
2. Now, God seems to be speaking as this next section (vss. 4-8) is in the first person. What is God promising to all those who repent?
- a. For the ones who repent God will heal *“their”* apostasy and He will love with an everlasting steadfast love.**
- (1) We don’t think of sins as disease...but the disease of sin...the death that comes with sin...is overcome by the Blood of Christ on the Cross for His own where this declaration comes to its fuller expression.**
- (2) God declares His readiness to receive those who do repent.**
- (3) Of course, the fullness of the promise of this healing won’t actually be experienced until they return from the Babylonian Exile. They will begin to see it in exile but won’t see fully until after.**
- b. God is reiterating the covenant relationship where He has promised blessing when we live and walk as He describes.**
- (1) In this case, the dew represents needed moisture for the growth of plants...and vines...which represents God’s provisions.**
- (2) As God cares for His people again they reap the benefits of His blessings.**
- (3) The Targum interestingly, transliterates this this way *“I will be like the dew to Israel...”*...this way... *“My Word shall be as dew to Israel...”* taking this interpretation from Deut. 32:2- *“May my teaching drop as the rain, my word distill as the dew, like gentle rain upon the tender grass, and like showers upon the herb.”***
- (4) Vs. 7 should read more properly- *“They that dwell under my shadow, shall return...”***
- **Song of Solomon 2:3**
  - **Psalms 91:1**
  - **Isaiah 25:4-5**
  - **The Targum reads this in an interesting way... *“...and they shall be gathered out of the midst of their captivity, they shall dwell under the shadow of their Messiah.”* 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jews were looking hard for the Messiah...and God did not open their eyes to see.**
- c. Vs. 8 is to be understood as those of the returnees from the Exile...**
- (1) But even more specifically those who God has given faith and live under the influence of His saving grace.**
- (2) Read II Cor. 6:14-15...these passages are really asking the same question and coming to the same conclusions...no more idols...no more adultery...**

**(3) God is saying to them...Aren't I better than idols? Can I in any way even be compared to idols? Did your old idols do anything for you? Can there be an accord between idols and the One true God?**

**(4) God's provision is "better than" anything those trees used in idol worship...Remember 4:13.**

**d. Many of Ephraim will turn back during and after the Exile but not enough to be listed in the tribes of Israel in the Lambs book in Revelation 7. There is no mention of Ephraim there because of this time when idolatry was so rampant.**

3. What is the prophet saying in conclusion to all he has said in verse 9?
  - a. **The choices that faced Israel are also set before us... wisdom or folly, discipleships or rebellion, fidelity or adultery, life or death.**
  - b. **Duet. 30:19-20**
  - c. **Psalm 1**
  - d. **Proverbs 10:27**
  - e. **John 8:47**
4. When we think of Ephraim/Israel tonight, how can we keep from being totally frightened of God's wrath considering in one way or another we commit many of the same sins they did?
5. Considering how this book started with Hosea being commanded by God to marry an unfaithful woman and how this book ends by Him calling His bride back to Himself...How does the object lesson support the message for them...and then us?

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
September 25, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. The Minor Prophets as they are called, because of their size of the books not content, were men who were called to service from the 9th Cent. B.C. through to the 5th Cent. B.C. These great books speak clearly to present sins and call for present action while clearly speaking to the struggles of the times. We find that no matter the age, sinful man does not change a whole lot. We have different “toys” to sin with but we still seek after the same sins in principle...revealing just how in need we are for this same God.
2. The Books in chronologic order are:
  - a. Jonah- 9th or 8th Cent. Prophet (probably late 9th Cent.)
  - b. Amos- 8th Cent. Prophet (similar to Hosea)
  - c. Hosea- 8th Cent. Prophet (750 -730 or so)
  - d. Micah- 8th Cent. Prophet (750-680's)
  - e. Nahum- 7th Cent. Prophet (660-650)
  - f. Zephaniah- 7th Cent. Prophet- (640-615)
  - g. Habakkuk- 7th Cent. Prophet (609-598)
  - h. Obadiah- 6th Cent. Prophet (550's)
  - i. Joel- 6th Cent. Prophet (520-500 or so)
  - j. Haggai- 6th Cent. Prophet (520- 5 or 6 months)
  - k. Zechariah- 6th Cent. Prophet (along with Haggai)
  - l. Malachi- 5th Cent. Prophet (483-433 or so)
3. Look at **Luke 24:44-48** a moment. ***“Then He said to them, ‘These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.’”*** What does this passage tell us?
  - a. **That we are to study all these books...OT...because they all look forward to Christ.**
  - b. **Jesus Himself says that all of these books are about Him and the redemption He came to secure for His own, and for the glory of His Father.**
  - c. **Only the Godhead can give people understanding. Here we have Jesus “opening their minds to understand...” and then in John’s Gospel Jesus tells His disciples that when the Spirit comes they will remember and understand all things Jesus said...with the rest of the Scriptures telling us that the Spirit does that for us who believe as well.**

4. Trivia: What may be “coincidental” about the Minor prophets?
  - a. **The Minor prophets are also called the “Book of Twelve”.**
    - (1) Same number of Tribes in Israel
    - (2) Same number of Apostles of Jesus.
  - b. **Four Writers wrote the 5 books of the Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel), same number of Gospel writers.**
  - c. **Does this knowledge matter? Probably not!**
  
5. Despite their name, the “Minor” Prophets hit us in ways that we are not so comfortable with sometimes. These final twelve books of the Old Testament have strange names and often use poetic language to introduce people and stories that are literally thousands of years old. But when we read the Minor Prophets to know Jesus better, and enjoy Him more deeply, we will see His glory afresh in at least six ways.
  - a. We will discover the character of Christ.
    - (3) **God reveals Himself as a jealous husband whose people have committed adultery with other gods (Hosea 1–3). Jesus is the Bridegroom of His redeemed people, the church Mark 2:19–20; Ephesians 5:22–33.**
    - (4) **God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding steadfast love, but will not clear the guilty (Jonah 4:2; Nahum 1:2–3). Jesus was the fullest embodiment of grace and truth (John 1:16–18) while at the same time being the righteous Judge who will execute God’s wrath (Revelation 19:11–21).**
  - b. We will uncover the horror of the sin for which Jesus died.
    - (3) **Often in graphic detail, the Minor Prophets describe the many different ways sin manifests itself, such as spiritual adultery, (Hosea 2:1–13), idolatry (Hosea 4:10–19), mistreating others (Amos 1:2–2:16; Micah 2:1–3:12), prejudice (Jonah 1:1–6; 4:1–11), and impurity (Malachi 1:6–14)...in God’s people...God’s covenant was established by God and we were expected to keep that covenant by walking in His ways...and His people did that...but also, found themselves suffering along with those who were part of Israel but were not of God.**
    - (4) **We see the same sins in the world today and in our own hearts (Romans 1:18–3:19; Ephesians 2:1–3), exposing our need for Jesus.**
  - c. We will anticipate a real day when Jesus will judge the world.
    - (3) **The Minor Prophets repeatedly refer to the coming Day of the Lord, when God will execute judgment on His enemies (Joel 1:2–2:11; Obadiah 1–16; Zephaniah 1:2–18). This is also apart of God’s covenant promises with His people.**
    - (4) **The judgment threatened for Israel and the surrounding nations anticipates the final judgment on all humanity on the last day Acts 17:30–31. It is this judgment for the sin of His people that Jesus took upon himself at the cross Matthew 27:32–56.**

- d. We will recognize the King of kings.
  - (3) We will see descriptions of the righteous king that Jesus fulfills.**  
Unlike the unfaithful kings who ruled over Israel and Judah, God promises a king from David's line who will establish peace and rule over God's people as a shepherd (Micah 5:2-5). His reign will extend to all nations and transform creation itself (Amos 9:11-15; Zechariah 9:9; 14:9).
  - (4) As the true son of David (Matthew 1:1), Jesus has become our peace (Ephesians 2:14) and rules over his people as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-18). He sits at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 1:1-13), awaiting the day when he will transform creation (Revelation 21-22).**
- e. We will appreciate the certainty and cost of our salvation.
  - (3) We will see the sure and certain promises of the salvation that Jesus accomplishes. Because God is compassionate, He promises He will tread our iniquities underfoot and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.**
  - (4) See Micah 7:18-20- *"Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of His inheritance? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old."***
  - (5) As "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29, 35-36), Jesus "bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24).**
- f. And we will be reminded that we have Jesus's Spirit living in us.
  - (3) We see the wonderful promises of the Spirit that Jesus pours out on His people. As part of redeeming His people, God promises to pour out His Spirit on all His people, regardless of their sex or social status. See Joel 2:28-32- *"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, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit."***
  - (4) As the risen and exalted Lord, Jesus pours out the Spirit on His people to empower us to live holy lives and bear witness to Him (Acts 2:1-41).**
- g. All of this, in the final analysis...which I suppose this would be # 7, is that we see in the Minor Prophets God fulfilling His covenant with, in and through His people...which is ultimately fulfilled by Jesus for His elect.
- 6. Of all the attributes of God spoken of in the Minor Prophets I found (and then later discovered that my discovery wasn't my own) that these 12 writers focus mostly on 3 of God's attributes more than any others. Which ones?
  - h. God's sovereignty
    - 1. This one attribute rises above the rest.**
    - 2. Nothing happens outside His direct determination.**

- i. God's holiness-
    1. **The Prophets are constantly making a sharp denunciation of the sin of the people**
    2. **Their sin is an offense to a holy God...**
    3. **Their sin is an offense to what the covenantal God has done for them....**
    4. **Their sin is an offense to God's Holy Word.**
  - j. God's love which obviously includes His justice...
    1. **God is loving when He is also just.**
    2. **God disciplines those He has chosen and loves.**
    3. **It is because of His justice the He brings justice.**
    4. **See Prov. 14: 34- *"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."***
7. Now let's wrack our brains a bit.
- a. What would you say is the main take away point (s) of Jonah?
    - (1) **A story of pride**
    - (2) **The foreshadowing and actual inclusion of the Gentiles.**
      - **The Sailors who worship God when they see His power.**
      - **The Ninevites who repent to God.**
    - (3) **God is merciful...**
    - (4) **God will do what He has chosen to do....God's Sovereignty.**
    - (5) **God is always right in His choices.**
    - (6) **How can we who have been shown such great mercy, be less than merciful to others? *"Blessed are the merciful..."***
  - b. What would you say is the main take away point (s) of Amos?
    - (1) **Obedience is followed by blessing, disobedience by judgment.**
    - (2) **This book maybe more than the others...has an eye to the final coming of Christ.**
      - **See Acts 15:12-20**
      - **A day when there will be a famine of the Word.**
      - **The destruction of Israel with the eye toward the building of God's church...not the Temple in Jerusalem ...but God's Church. Essentially rising out of the ashes of Israel's demise...**
      - **Out of judgment comes restoration of Gods people.**
    - (3) **Martin Luther King, Jr. quoted from Amos 5:24 in his I Have a Dream speech- *"No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until, 'justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.'"* Amos calls all generations of believers to not be satisfied! See Amos 8:4-6. *"Hear this, you who trample on the needy and bring the poor of the land to an end, saying, "When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great and deal deceitfully with false balances, that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals and sell the chaff of the wheat?"***
  - c. What would you say is the main take away point (s) of Hosea?
    - (1) **Hosea was commanded to marry a prostitute. His life was used by God as a living illustration.**



**(2) God is faithful even when His people are not...for He keeps His covenant...**

- **This means that He willingly rewards and restores His children when they repent and actually turn from their sin and sinful behavior.**
- **But He also must judge wrathfully the sin of even His people for breaking the covenant.**

**(3) Choose wisely!**

- **Fidelity or adultery**
- **Life or death.**

**(4) Disobedience nets judgment...but God's people will be restored...even if they must suffer.**

8. Why should these books be looked at as books of encouragement for us rather than fear?
9. What do you know of the prophet Micah?
- a. **Micah gives a similar message to the rest...**
- (1) Israel and Judah had and/or will turn away from God**
- (2) Disaster is coming...because they followed false prophets and false religions...idolatrous people.**
- (3) Micah's claim to fame perhaps was his seeking to remind the people that God requires faithful living of His people not hypocritical religious ritual.**
- b. **Micah also makes it clear; what God's wants is not hard to understand. See Micah 6:8. *"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/mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"* So they and we have no excuse.**

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
October 2, 2018

C. Prayer

D. Review

10. What did we say last week were the 3 main attributes of God spoken of in the Minor Prophets? Which ones?

k. God's sovereignty

l. God's holiness-

m. God's love... which obviously includes His justice...

**11.** I know we looked at specific take a ways last week from Jonah, Amos and Hosea, but what 2 words do most biblical commentators use to quickly describe the themes of these books. **Judgement and restoration.**

**12.** How, again, are these books meant to encourage us?

E. Prophets

1. Let's look a moment at the role of the prophet and then we will get into the book of Micah. How would you define a prophet based on what you know from Scripture alone?

**g. Some prophets spoke under the direct leading of the Holy Spirit in that they foretold what God was doing and would do...**

**(3) Roughly 10% of the prophets of the OT fell into this category of being the direct mouthpiece for God to His people.... Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Samuel, King David, the 12 Minor prophets as well....all called by God to do His bidding.**

- **The Hebrew classifies these men as “men of God”, “servant of God”, “seers”...these were God's men called by God for a specific task mainly to speak for Him and write down His Word for posterity. These prophets proclaimed the message given to them by God...they were God's spokesmen...speaking in His name and with His authority. See Ex. 4:12; Jer. 1:9; Ezek. 2:7; I Peter 1:20-21**
- **Deut. 18: 15-22 defines for us the role of God's prophet as well as describes for us the false prophet.**
- **False prophets who say they speak for God- death- Duet. 13:1-5**

**(4) The rest of the prophets simply proclaimed the Scriptures that they had at the time to the people from the ones who had received them directly from God...**

- **They spoke the actual words of the prophets and they also illustrated and taught these words for their direct audience...just as preachers do today... they usually worked with and under one of God's called Prophets, like Samuel.**
- **They did not have the authority of the actual Prophets of God because in most cases ...few exceptions...like with Elisha, the disciple of Elijah...God did not choose to speak through them.**
- **The people understood the difference between and actual prophet of God and their “sons” or apprentices...or disciples.**

- **When we read of the school of the prophets we can think of the original seminary to a certain degree.**
  - **“Sons” or “disciples” or “company” of the prophets were young men who lived together at these different schools.**
  - **Ramah, Bethel, Gibeah, Gilgal and Jericho.**
2. What were the defining purposes of the Prophet of God?
- a. **The defining character and or purpose of the prophet of God was their steadfast teaching and proclaiming Yahweh’s character and His sovereign rule in and over history: Yahweh alone was God, and in divine justice and mercy He gave order and meaning to the experiences of mankind.**
  - h. **God’s prophets called mankind to repent.**
    - (3) **God’s prophets whether those directly called or those disciples of the Prophets in the School of the prophets demanded ethical responsibility and theological purity of God’s people and of all people made in God’s image.**
    - (4) **They were also given to speaking to the social and political issues of the day bringing God’s Word to bear on these for definition and judgment as well as coming restoration...whether by direct revelation from God or by way of expositing the Scriptures for the people.**
  - i. **An essential ingredient of prophetic inspiration was the activity of the Holy Spirit. It is said of most prophets in the Scriptures that the Spirit came upon them at the time that they prophesied. Hosea 9:7 says that the prophet is called “the man of the spirit.”**
  - j. **NT prophets- Acts 11:28, 13:1...this office seems to have ceased and was simply a carryover from the OT until such time as God’s Word was circulated and accepted...Hebrews 1:1 says basically there is no need for the office of prophet any longer... *“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by his Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world.”***
  - k. **As believers filled with the Holy Spirit we are called upon by the Spirit of God to discern the false prophets...hence false prophesying... *“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.”***

## F. Micah

### i. Introduction

- a. **Micah is short for “Micayahu”...think Mike from Michael. And is most easily translated into English as “Who is like Yahweh”.**
- b. **Micah prophecies during the obvious reigns of Jotham (750-735 B.C.), Ahaz (735-715 BC) and Hezekiah (715-686 BC or so), kings of Judah and Pekah (742-740 BC) and then Hoshea (731-722), kings of Israel and then Assyria takes complete control and destruction happens because of God’s divine decree against Israel. Same time as Isaiah, Amos and Hosea’s.**

- c. Micah gives a similar message from God as the rest of Prophets of God-
  - 1. Israel and Judah had and/or will turn away from God.
  - 2. Disaster is coming...because they followed false prophets and false religions...they had become an idolatrous and unjust people.
- n. Micah's has a few claims to fame:
  - 1. He sought to remind the people that God requires faithful living of His people not hypocritical religious ritual.
  - 2. His preaching seems to be the instrument used to bring King Hezekiah to repentance and Jerusalem back to following God for a few more years. See Jeremiah 26:17-19- *"And certain of the elders of the land arose and spoke to all the assembled people, saying, 'Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and said to all the people of Judah: 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height. Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear the Lord and entreat the favor of the Lord, and did not the Lord relent of the disaster that he had pronounced against them? But we are about to bring great disaster upon ourselves.'"* So important was this sermon and so dramatic was the change in the King that years later that these "certain elders" are reminding the people of God's goodness...
    - 3. Key passages:
      - Micah 6:8- *"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 7:18- *"Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?"*
  - o. We see a clear prophesy concerning judgment but also restoration in the Messiah.
  - p. Clear prophesy of what God is going to do...some of which actually happens during his lifetime...think definition of prophet... and stuff yet to happen, along with clear direction of what God expects from His people.
- i. Micah 1:1-7
  - a. Vs. 1- I know I just gave a "great" introduction to Micah but how does this verse confirm most or all of what I have said? (this is so we have a working knowledge of the Scriptures)
    - 1. **This is the Word of the LORD...of Yahweh...no one else!**
    - 2. **This is the Word of Yahweh given to Micah...he didn't make this up...proving he is a true Prophet of God to those who might question it.**
      - This Hebrew word means that the Word of the LORD came plainly, powerfully, and clearly...so clearly that it appears to him to already be accomplished.
    - 3. **Interesting...this is the Word of Yahweh given to he whose whole name means "Who is like Yahweh"**
      - It is uncertain if it is a question or simply a statement.

- He so vehemently opposed so many injustices, most of which happened between the city dwellers and the country folk...white collar verses blue collar... between brothers and sister of Israel...it was against God's law to discriminate, to be prejudice against someone, to show partiality especially... against brothers and sister in the "family"...so his character mirrored that of God...who is like God.
  - Most speculate that he was from a covenant home...otherwise they would not have given him such a name with hopes of him emulating the covenant God.
4. **Moresbeth= Moresbeth-Gath...**
- Gath being a Philistine city would have claimed this town and so many of the people lived in uncertainty.
  - It was a small rural/agricultural community so he looked at things from those lens...but he was a prophet of the whole nation.
  - He seems to despise the city for reasons that we will see.
  - He is of Moresbeth so he has been characterized as the country preacher...to Isaiah being the city preacher. Or the Shorter Catechism to the Larger Catechism?
  - But he was fully aware of the corruption of the cities so he didn't just stay in his little town.
5. He had a long ministry...even accounting that not all dates are exact...it would appear that he prophesied between 60 and 70 years.
6. He was around when Sennacherib invaded Judah in 701 so he would have some personal experience with the things he talked about.
7. It appears that he did most of his prophesying from his hometown though against both to Samaria...the Northern Kingdom and Jerusalem- the Southern Kingdom...though he may have actually been in Jerusalem to prophesy to King Hezekiah.
- b. Vss. 2-7- Pretty clear language... so what is he communicating and to whom is he communicating it?
1. Vs. 2
- ***"Hear, you peoples, all of you..."***
    - a. He is telling them to listen to what God has told him.
    - b. He is speaking to all the people...all 12 tribes. ***"...all of you..."*** the Hebrew understands this to mean- all within the sound of his voice and all who will hear it 2<sup>nd</sup> hand. This may be one of the most unusual construction of words to translate from the Hebrew into English...it would have been clear to them...just like another set of verses Gen. 3:8- ***"And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden."*** The full Hebrew version would have included the understanding that Adam and eve also hid themselves from one another at the same time.

- c. Hence... *"Pay attention, O earth, and all the people that is in it."*
- d. When God speaks, His people...all the people... are obligated to listen... and they should have a desire to pay attention.
- *"...let the Lord God be a witness against you...from His holy temple."*
  - e. From His throne God calls Himself as an eyewitness against His own people. This is not good for them for there can be no one or nothing to rebut God's own testimony.
  - f. He has already called the earth and all the people as a witness and as the judged...so His law that requires 2 or more witnesses is fulfilled.

2. Vs. 3-4

- *"And the LORD is coming out of His place..."*
  - a. Not just to testify against them...for their sentence has already been determined.
  - b. Justice is coming...is at hand. Assyria is on the march.
- *"...and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth."*
  - c. He will come down...but not all the way down.
  - d. Think also of Gen. 11:7-8- *"Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city."*
- Vs. 4-
  - e. Metaphorically and physically this is what happens when you get the LORD off His Throne.
  - f. God had been merciful, long-suffering, patient...He had called them to repentance over and over again...
  - g. But now it is too late...the time has come and it is terrible.

3. Vs. 5-7

- God seems to begin to talk at vs. 5b...repeating Micah's earlier statement and turning it into an indicting question. *"What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria?"*
  - a. Samaria was the capital city at this time.
  - b. According to the book I Kings, Jeroboam, the first ruler of the newly seceded northern kingdom of Israel, from Shechem established two sanctuaries to rival the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem: Dan, along his northern border, and Bethel, along his southern border not far from Jerusalem.
  - c. He commissioned the construction of two golden calves and installed one at each shrine.
  - d. In the biblical account, "the sin(s) of Jeroboam" become paradigmatic for northern apostasy culminating in the fall of the kingdom (1 Kings 14:16, 1 Kings 16:31, 2 Kings 3:3).

- e. **The narrative in the book of Kings also bears striking similarities to the account of Aaron's construction of a golden calf in Exodus 32, highlighting the negative portrayal of Jeroboam's religion. Later reflections preserved in 1 Kgs 12:32-33 and in the book of Chronicles, amplify this condemnation.**
- f. **He also ordained a new priesthood and established a pilgrimage festival on a date of his own choosing. These shrines are portrayed as active places of worship throughout the duration of the northern kingdom (2 Kings 10:29, Amos 4:4, Amos 8:14) and, in the case of Bethel, afterward as well (2 Kings 17:24-28)**
- g. **Samaria doesn't become the capital until Omri's reign (1 Kings 16) in the 800's BC (over 100 years later)...and at that time it becomes the governmental and economic hub for the Northern Kingdom....so as was said...when you here Samaria (the capitol city), you think of the Northern Kingdom from that time forward.**
- h. **None of the Prophets or priests of the Northern Kingdom had been called by God so they were all false idol worshippers.**
- i. **From idolatry comes all the others sins that they were willing to perpetrate... See Amos 2:6-8 for reference.**
- j. **So much sin...so much destruction, the like of which Israel will not ever recover from.**
- k. **The type of destruction talked about even includes destroying the idols which Israel had not been willing to give up...God uses Sennacherib to destroy Israel's idols and most of Judah's as well. See Isaiah 10:11- *"As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols, whose carved images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria, shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols as I have done to Samaria and her images?"***
- c. **Why would God do this to His people?**
  - 1. **Sin. Plain and simple...**
  - 2. **Because of God's covenant, God must judge Israel as He has...it is only just to do so...it wouldn't be just not to do so...and God is just and the justifier.**
  - 3. **All the calamities that happened because of the people's sin...their transgressions against God's law...their rejection of His love for them.**
  - 4. **They had determined to walk a different path than the one laid out by God.**

### 13. Micah 1: 8-16

- a. **In verse 8-9, what is the prophet saying?**
  - a. **He is not at all happy that he must preach judgment.**
  - b. **He wails and mourns as one morning for the dead...a whole nation will be affected and not even Judah will be exempted.**

- c. Both jackals and ostriches scream loudly when they are agitated...so his lamenting will be loud and heard from all. Just like public mourners would be at the death of a prominent person.**
- d. Story: Andrew and Horatius Bonar were walking one day with Robert Murray M'Cheyne and M'Cheyne turns to Andrew and asks him, what he'd been preaching on. And Bonar replied, *"Well, I've been preaching on hell, the reality of it, the gravity of it, the coming judgment of God upon the wicked."* M'Cheyne paused and asked in response, *"Ah, yes, but did you preach it with tears?" Did you preach it weeping? Does your heart break when you consider the danger to which those who will not bend their knees to Jesus expose themselves*" The point of this story is that we must declare the bad news so that the good news of Jesus Christ might shine more clearly as God's only remedy. But when we share this "bad news" does our heart break for the lost...just like the prophet...who desires that they be saved ...his only motivation.**



## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

October 9, 2018

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. What are some differences between the Prophet of God and the School of the prophets? Do we have prophets today?
  - a. **Prophet of God spoke for God...SOP spoke for the prophet.**
  - b. **Prophet of God were in direct communication with God...SOP sat at the feet of the Prophet and then taught.**
  - c. **Prophet of God was used by God to declare God's judgment and restoration...SOP was used to explain this word of God through God's prophet.**
2. Correction: Thanks to the ones who pointed out my error in calling Samaria one of the places that Jeroboam had placed a bull. Information from the notes that I overlooked last week.
  - a. According to the book I Kings, Jeroboam, the first ruler of the newly seceded northern kingdom of Israel, from Shechem established two sanctuaries to rival the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem: Dan, along his northern border, and Bethel, along his southern border not far from Jerusalem.
  - b. He commissioned the construction of two golden calves and installed one at each shrine. In the biblical account, these shrines provoke vehement censure (1 Kings 13:1-14:18), and "the sin(s) of Jeroboam" become paradigmatic for northern apostasy culminating in the fall of the kingdom (1 Kings 14:16, 1 Kings 16:31, 2 Kings 3:3). The narrative in the book of Kings also bears striking similarities to the account of Aaron's construction of a golden calf in Exodus 32, highlighting the negative portrayal of Jeroboam's religion. Later reflections preserved in 1 Kgs 12:32-33 and in the book of Chronicles, amplify this condemnation.
  - c. He also ordained a new priesthood and established a pilgrimage festival on a date of his own choosing. These shrines are portrayed as active places of worship throughout the duration of the northern kingdom (2 Kings 10:29, Amos 4:4, Amos 8:14) and, in the case of Bethel, afterward as well (2 Kings 17:24-28)
  - d. Samaria doesn't become the capital until Omri's reign (I Kings 16) in the 800's BC (over 100 years later)...and at that time it becomes the governmental and economic hub for the Northern Kingdom....so as was said...when you here Samaria (the capitol city), you think of the Northern Kingdom from that time forward.
  - e. When going through Amos we made this case but I seemingly got caught up in Samaria and misspoke...so thanks for those who pointed this out.
3. So what was the message in the prophecy in verses 2-7?
  - a. **He is first , of all talking to everyone in the combined kingdoms and to the whole known earth.**
  - b. **Something that hit me last time...if this message goes out to the whole known earth at the time...who else besides the North and South Kingdoms might have gotten this prophecy? And how would that help to solidify their plans which of course was God's plan all along?**

- c. But he is speaking specifically to the transgressions of Samaria...the Northern Kingdom.**
- d. Judgment is coming and it will not be stopped upon the Northern kingdom!**

**C. Micah 1: 8-16**

1. In verse 8-9, what is the prophet saying and feeling towards what he has to say to Jerusalem?
  - a. He is not at all happy that he must preach judgment.**
  - b. He wails and mourns as one mourning for the dead...a whole nation will be affected and not even Judah will be exempted.**
  - c. Both jackals and ostriches scream loudly when they are agitated...so his lamenting will be loud and heard from all. Just like public mourners would be at the death of a prominent person.**
  - d. Story: Andrew and Horatius Bonar were walking one day with Robert Murray M'Cheyne and M'Cheyne turns to Andrew and asks him, what he'd been preaching on. And Bonar replied, *"Well, I've been preaching on hell, the reality of it, the gravity of it, the coming judgment of God upon the wicked."* M'Cheyne paused and asked in response, *"Ah, yes, but did you preach it with tears?" Did you preach it weeping? Does your heart break when you consider the danger to which those who will not bend their knees to Jesus expose themselves*" The point of this story is that we must declare the bad news so that the good news of Jesus Christ might shine more clearly as God's only remedy. But when we share this "bad news" does our heart break for the lost...just like the prophet...who desires that they be saved ...his only motivation.**
2. In verses 10-14, what do we see that Micah is saying?
  - a. Micah, in his mind, walks through all the cities and towns of the land and he speaks a word of warning or one of coming judgment or characterizes how the people will mourn or seek to flee for refuge when the judgment comes.**
  - b. What we miss in our English translations is the ironic play-on-words that Micah uses all the way through the second half of the chapter. As he names each town, he finds Hebrew verbs that sound like the name of that town and there's a pun, there's a play-on-words. He's not trying to be witty or clever, but he trying to bring some force and power to his message.**
    - (1) The English translation would really complicate our reading even more...but this reading would have been easy for the people to understand.**
    - (2) James Moffett- an Scottish theologian of late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Cent.- translated this section literally. Here are just a few of his translations so we can see what Micah's hearer would have heard,**
      - vs. 10- *"Weep tears at Tear Town. Grovel in the dust at Dust Town. " Dust... like the dust of the ash in the traditional rite of mourning. So cry profusely crying town, roll in the ash of grief mourning town for your end is at hand.***

- ***Vs. 11- Fair forth stripped, O Fair Town. Stir Town dare not stir.*** (Moffatt translation) ***“Tell it not in Gath; weep not at all; in Beth-le-aphrah roll yourselves in the dust.”*** (ESV)...vs. 11 might also read something like this, ***“Pass away, you well dressed, well-mannered and beautiful elites, into nakedness and shame.”*** ... The citizens...the elite, specifically, will be led away in nakedness and shame.
  - ***vs. 13- “To horse and drive away, O Horse Town.”*** (Moffatt translation)... ***“Harness the steeds to the chariots, inhabitants of Lachish...”*** God has him use such construction ...what we would call “puns” today...not to be funny but to bring force and power to his message.
    - 1. Names handled in this way became omens...usually of doom.**
    - 2. So using the name like this would linger over the inhabitants until judgment finally came.**
  - ***Vs. 14 – “So the betrothed will receive her just gifts...”*** that is this town will pass from her tribe...her family... into the hands of a cruel new husband...the invader.
  - **Judgment, he says, in verse 12 is going to come all the way to the gates of Jerusalem. Verse 14 implies it, talking about parting gifts. Verse 16 comes right out and says it - Assyria is going to come and take everyone away from their land into exile, into captivity.**
- q. He is saying that judgment is coming and there is no earthly hiding place. There’s no earthly hiding place.**
- r. He is saying, Even the very names of your secure homes, your safe, familiar communities even your abundance of horses...read military...are a kind of prophecy of doom against you waiting to fall at any moment.**
- s. Here’s the point God is making through Micah... The safe and familiar can lull us into a false sense of security. “Nothing can touch us,” we tell ourselves. “All is well,” we say. But there is nowhere to hide from the justice of God.**
- 3. Look closely at verses 15-16...what do you see?**
- a. It would seem that judgment abounds coming to its natural conclusion.**
  - b. Micah seems to be building toward this climax...just when they thought they had heard the worst...now He hits them with the word exile...which means :**
    - 1. They will lose absolutely everything...**
    - 2. That God actually will and does keep His promises...as he had promised this would happen before.**
    - 3. By weaving this poem from God the way God does...He makes it abundantly clear that these people are under His divine wrath which should knock them out of their own complacency and turn them from their sin.**
  - c. But might there be a silver lining hinted at?**

**(1) Mareshah was a military town...set up to protect the land...even this will be overrun and destroyed...so no good news here.**

- (2) But he sends them to Adullam... ring a bell? That is where David stayed when he was in exile and on the run from King Saul...and it is where David gathered a sort of ragtag band of misfits and dropouts. I Samuel 22 says this about that moment in David's history - *"Everyone who was in distress and everyone who was in debt and everyone who was bitter in soul gathered to him at Adullam."* And God has Micah say in a sense- *"You're no better than the band of ne'er do wells and thugs that gathered around David in the caves of Adullam."* You may think yourselves to be the glory of Israel...national pride...but because of your sin you are no better than those who hung out with David...so no good news here...right?**
- (3) Well...those who gathered around David as weak and unlikely a band to take over as an army that they were, they were nevertheless the beginnings of God's kingdom through David. Through them, through this ragtag band of misfits God established David's throne. Under King Saul, Israel had lost its way, but through this unlikely group, a new beginning will dawn.**
- (4) Those who will actually submit themselves ...humble themselves...and mourn for the people in repentance by the act of shaving their heads...pulling their hair out...mourn for all that will be carried off to exile. The prophet had already done this himself ...verse 8.**
- (5) Something like that is hinted at here as the glory of Israel comes to see itself as it truly is before God as wicked, rebellious, selfish sinners who need rescuing and they flee to David's ancient stronghold at God's command. God is going to preserve a remnant of His people there and from them, He will build His kingdom anew.**
- (6) These people are called upon to mourn for and pray for these that go into Exile...and what is the outcome of those prayers...a remnant returns and rebuilds the city and the Temple at God's direction.**

- 4. What is God communicating to us from these passages?**
  - a. That we all too often take pride in our heritage of this world...we are Texans aren't we...well. At least some of us our...we are Reformed aren't we ...makes us better than others right?**
  - b. As a Reformed church we are blessed more than non-Reformed churches right. Or...look at how blessed I and my family is...I wonder why they are not as blessed.**
  - c. Look at what those other Christians are doing wrong...and how they who claim the name of Christ denigrate it.**
  - d. Micah would look at God's Church and call us to the quick as well...for presuming upon God's grace.**
  - e. It's easy for us to talk smugly against our brothers and sisters in Christ.**
  - f. But we must be praying for the lost...yet to be saved...and we are to be praying for the Church...there is too much darkness in the Church...not in a way that is smug and superior but as one who recognizes our own sin and our desire for others to recognize theirs.**

**g. Could this be some of what Jesus meant when He said on the Sermon on the Mount, *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."***

**(1) Did He mean, blessed are those who mourn over the reality of their sin, who have been shaken out of the comfort and ease of their affluent, safe surroundings to see how precarious their position really is?**

**(2) Did he mean, Mourn and flee to Christ and find refuge in Him?**

**(3) Of course He did.... For it is when we recognize ourselves as sinners...that we can then begin to actually walk in the way God has prepared beforehand for us to walk.**

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
October 16, 2018

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. So what was the message in the prophecy in verses 8-16?
2. What are some of the things God is communicating to us from these verses 1-16?
  - a. **This is the Word of the LORD...of Yahweh.**
    - (1) **This is the Word of Yahweh given to Micah...he didn't make this up...proving he is a true Prophet of God to those who might question it.**
    - (2) **This Hebrew word means that the Word of the LORD came plainly, powerfully, and clearly...so clearly that it appears to him to already be accomplished.**
  - b. **That we all too often take pride in our heritage of this world...**
    - (1) **We are Texans aren't we...well. At least some of us our...**
    - (2) **As a Reformed church, we are blessed more than non-Reformed churches right.**
    - (3) **Or...look at how blessed I and my family is...I wonder why they are not as blessed.**
    - (4) **Micah would look at God's Church and call us to the quick as well...for presuming upon God's grace.**
  - c. **Do not grow complacent.**
  - d. **Recognize that corporate sin is also personal sin...and...personal sin is also corporate sin in the grand scheme of things.**
  - e. **It's too easy for us to talk smugly against our brothers and sisters in Christ.**
  - f. **But we must be praying for the lost...yet to be saved...and we are to be praying for the Church...there is too much darkness in the Church...not in a way that is smug and superior but as one who recognizes our own sin and our desire for others to recognize theirs.**
    - (1) **I Tim. 2:1-2- *"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way."***
    - (2) **Could this be some of what Jesus meant when He said on the Sermon on the Mount, *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."***
      - **Did He mean, blessed are those who mourn over the reality of their sin, who have been shaken out of the comfort and ease of their affluent, safe surroundings to see how precarious their position really is?**
      - **Did he mean, Mourn and flee to Christ and find refuge in Him?**
    - (3) **Of course He did.... For it is when we recognize ourselves as sinners...that we can then begin to actually walk in the way God has prepared beforehand for us to walk.**

C. Micah 2

1. Who is the prophet and God talking to in this chapter? **Judah/Jerusalem.**
2. What were the wealthy and influential doing according to verses 1-2?
  - a. **Planning and implementing ways to oppress and defraud their own people.**
    - (1) **Taking what was not theirs...making lesser wealthy people poor and keeping the poor... poor and dependent upon them for their very life.**
    - (2) **Even the church leadership of the time was in the habit of doing this...and then, even in Jesus' time we hear Him say to the Pharisees because it was still in practice at the time, *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation."* (I have always found it interesting that He chose to put these 2 together!)**
      - **Hypocrites is the operative word...then Jesus explains how they are hypocrites in the next passage.**
      - **Taking the widows house with judicial reasoning...not paid tithe or something....social hypocrisy since their "job" was to help the widow.**
      - **Making long prayers...spiritual hypocrisy...because the prayers were for a pretense...to make themselves look spiritual .**
  - b. What would you say is the significance of his use of the term "covet" in verse 2 for these in Jerusalem?
    - (1) **Of course, it comes from the last commandment... *"You shall not covet you neighbor's home...wife...man or maidservant...ox or donkey...anything that belongs to your neighbor."*- Exodus 20:17**
    - (2) **So he is reminding them that they are sinning ...just the way God said not to...and just the way the northern kingdom was and had sinned...the JUST reason God condemned and destroyed them as a people.**
    - (3) **Coveting= to want something with all your heart that you do not have, particularly something belonging to someone else. It, in effect, tells God that we are not satisfied with what He has given and gives to us by His mercy and grace.**
3. What does God say that He is going to do about the plans of these schemers and oppressors in verses 3-5?
  - a. **They have been "allowed" to run amok.**
  - b. **Now God, after seeking their repentance from them on multiple occasions (see Amos), will *"devise disaster"* this disaster had been planned and is preparing to be implemented.**
    - (1) **They only considered their plans.**
    - (2) **They had purposefully forgotten that God had plans too and that His plans would prevail.**
  - c. **God describes the disaster he is bringing:**
    - (1) **All that they have will be taken from them by the people who are coming....they had used violence...oppression and an unjust system to obtain their wealth now they will suffer the same.**

**(2) Their destruction would be so complete that when the time came and they were once again in the land and the Jubilee year or the lot came around so that they might reclaim their inheritance, they would have no one to represent their families in the nation...no elder or one who represents them to have their name placed on a list of Jewish families...there place ...their name ...would be lost forever.**

4. What is going on in verse 6-7? What is the prophet complaining about?

**a. The religious leaders command the prophet of God not to preach the truth to them...**

**(1) Actually they command him... *"Do not prattle..."* (NKJV) so they were lumping him in with themselves who foolishly spoke about things of no consequences challenging and rejecting God's word for the things that made the people feel good. They actually were the "prattlers" of verse 11.**

**(2) Just like Amaziah did to Amos...Amos 7:16-*"Do not prophesy against Israel, and do not preach against the house of Isaac."* And you possibly remember how Amaziah's cursing and commanding against the prophet of God, worked out for him and his family. Same disaster that God said would happen to the oppressors in the first 5 verses.**

**(3) After all this is just the wailings of a country preacher.**

**(4) Just like the religious elite did with Isaiah and would do against Jeremiah.**

**b. They commanded the prophet to stop preaching the truth so that their livelihood would not be affected, for they were profiting off the wealthy...and if what he said comes true they would be discredited...because they were guilty of all the same things that the wealthy oppressors were doing but it wasn't as public.**

**c. This showed a lack of respect for the office of the prophet...everyone viewed them all together...as doomsday screechers...or...prosperity prophets...neither of which most people paid any attention to.**

**d. Then the Prophet speaks up for himself... *"Should this be said, O house of Jacob? Has the Lord grown impatient? Are these His deeds? Do not my words do good to him who walks upright?"***

**(1) That is, is God impatient not willing any longer to wait on us...that is not the God I know...He is all loving and patient, just like His word says He is.**

**(2) Isn't all that we have from God anyway? God's word makes it clear He gives us whatever we want and need...He won't keep anything good from His children because He loves us and wants us to be prosperous among the peoples of the earth.**

**(3) They were claiming that God could not have said what the prophet said He said, because God doesn't get angry with His children. In the end, God will eventually accept them back no matter what...for that is the kind of God He is.**

**(4) But the righteous will hear Micah's voice as the word of God and walk accordingly in repentance and faith.**



- e. While these are the words of the Prophet they are also the words of God, so why is God pointing this out?
    - (1) It is another charge against these people.**
      - **They are oppressing the Prophet of God seeking to silence him who speaks for God Himself.**
      - **They were seeking to silence God...these are capital crimes.**
    - (2) God is confirming their sentence.**
5. What other crimes are listed in verses 8-11?
- a. **They began treating everyone else (their brothers and sisters in the tribe of Judah) as the “enemy”...anyone who were less than they were...they were haughty as it said in verse 3. We know what happens to the haughty- Prov. 16:18- *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”***
  - b. **They saw nothing wrong with their behavior, they didn’t listen to God’s Word any longer- Prov. 29:18- *“Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law.”***
  - c. **They opening oppressed and exploited men, women and children equally.**
  - d. **The picture of stealing clothes...speaks of stealing their titles...their dignity...their personhood by turning some into property.**
  - e. **Purposefully distorting God’s word in their preaching- vs. 11...leading God’s people away. This is truly the “health and wealth gospel” at its best. *“I will preach to you of wine and strong drink...”***
    - (1) Wine...for your health.**
    - (2) Strong drink...for your prosperity.**
    - (3) This is like Joel Osteen or Beth Moore who preach on personal happiness and prosperity. Just what people want to hear.**
6. What does God say again that is going to happen in vs. 10-13?
- a. **That He IS going to judge severely the oppressors and those who work injustice among their own people...His people.**
  - b. **Prepare to leave this land one way or another because of all the uncleanness...this land is no longer holy ground.**
  - c. **Then He talks about restoration in verses 12-13. But it will only come after the judgment...but it is coming and the LORD will be in the lead of bringing them home...through the breach. Christ, the Shepherd King will gather His flock and will reign supreme!**
7. What are some ways that people experience oppression and injustice today, even in this country? True oppression and injustice...not the made up stuff that seems to be surfacing every day.
- a. **Telephone and on-line scams which target the elderly, specifically, but any other who fall for what they say.**
    - (1) People are robbed of their finances.**
    - (2) But they are also robbed of their dignity when they discover the they have allowed themselves to be scammed.**
  - b. **Human trafficking/slavery has a huge market in the wider-world today...but even here in this country.**

- c. **Cyber-crimes of all kinds are on the rise...stealing identity, finances, even your reputation in some cases.**
  - d. **The Church preaches “health and wealth” or any other thing that what the Bible teaches...just like the preachers in Jerusalem.**
  - e. **The government regularly stands in the way of the rights of its citizens.**
    - (1) Religious freedoms are challenged and even have to be litigated to be restored.**
    - (2) Abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, physician assisted suicide all impugn on one’s right to life.**
    - (3) Welfare for any who want it... (they may have been a helpful idea at the time but like all other government bureaucracy we have raised dependents...taking away dignity from millions. The poor will always be with us...but it is the Church, not the government that has been commanded to deal with the poor.**
8. What according to this chapter will God do to those who do these same things?
- a. **It seems that Micah knew His audience...He knew that those who were breaking the law would keep on breaking the law up until the last minute...God did too.**
  - b. **He also knew his message was for the church of His day...those whom God would gather...the remnant...and hence for us today.**
    - (1) To shake them from the security that they thought was in the Church alone**
    - (2) To shake them from their slumber of just looking the other way as injustice and oppression went on around them.**
    - (3) To make them aware that a mere profession of faith is not enough if you are living like the enemy of God.**

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
October 23, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What was the point (s) of chapter 2?

- a. **You are no different from Israel...you should have been but you weren't.**
- b. **Even your chosen leaders were false...**
  - (1) **They displayed an air and the actions of piety but were willing to steal from their own people.**
  - (2) **Sought to proclaim a false message/narrative to keep the people dependent upon them.**
    - **Promising the people something they could not deliver upon...**
    - **In God's name...no less.**
- c. **They are NOT loving God or One another.**

2. What can we take away from chapters 1 and 2 for our faith walk today?

- a. **This is the Word of the LORD...of Yahweh.**
- b. **We must not be complacent in our faith walk.**
- c. **We must be praying for the lost...yet to be saved...and we are to be praying for the Church...there is too much darkness in the Church...not in a way that is smug and superior but as one who recognizes our own sin and our desire for others to recognize theirs.**
  - (1) **See I Tim. 2:1-2**
  - (2) **Could this be some of what Jesus meant when He said on the Sermon on the Mount, "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*"**
    - **Did He mean, blessed are those who mourn over the reality of their sin, who have been shaken out of the comfort and ease of their affluent, safe surroundings to see how precarious their position really is?**
    - **Did he mean, Mourn and flee to Christ and find refuge in Him?**
  - (3) **Of course He did.... For it is when we recognize ourselves as sinners...that we can then begin to actually walk in the way God has prepared beforehand for us to walk.**
- d. **He also knew his message was for the church of His day...those whom God would gather...the remnant...and hence for us today.**
  - (1) **To shake them from the security that they thought was in the Church alone**
  - (2) **To shake them from their slumber of just looking the other way as injustice and oppression went on around them.**
  - (3) **To make them aware that a mere profession of faith is not enough if you are living like the enemy of God.**

C. Micah chapter 3-

1. What 3 groups of oppressive leaders does Micah denounce?

- a. **Princes/ruling class- for injustice**
- b. **Prophets- for false teaching and for oppression and a display of piety.**  
**Vs. 5-7**

- c. Elders/rulers- who oversee the day to day functions of the city and the Temple...and do nothing to change things...vs. 9-12**
2. And what would you say all the fuss is about?
- a. Princes/ruling class- for injustice- vs. 1-4 ***“Is it not for you to know justice?”***
- (1) Princes are put in place for the “good” of the people...this is God’s own design.**
  - (2) They are to have the peoples interest in mind at all times.**
  - (3) They are to be the protector of the people from themselves and others per God’s Word.**
  - (4) But when they don’t do as God wills then they are to be held to account for their lack...for their laziness...and as in this case for their injustices.**
    - **God calls upon the prophet to bring these charges before the Princes/royal family of the land...for their sins.**
      - **They hate good but love evil...they hate good in others and they hate that it might influence their lifestyle in anyway...**
      - **They are oppressive and cruel to those under their rule...they have no mercy...they are described as cannibals.**
      - **Greed and gluttony describe their appetites. They devour all that their people have...stripping them of any and all things that could give them any solace...returning to them only enough so that they are totally dependent upon them.**
      - **They make up crimes against the people to ruin families of perceived power.**
    - **Then they will have the audacity to call out to God in the end...Prov. 21:13- *“Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered.”***
      - **These folks could turn religion on when it was necessary or when the going got tough.**
      - **God is not persuaded by such hypocrisy. He sees a man heart.**
      - **The LORD knows the difference between true repentance and false.**
      - **Micah ends with basically saying that if they will not have God on His terms they will not have God at all.**
  - (5) They need to be reminded that there is a power far superior to theirs that put them into power and can and will take them out.**
  - (6) The Church is to stand in the place of the prophet...praying faithfully for the government but at the same time holding the government accountable for its actions against God’s Word that affects it ability to do as God has directed them.**
    - **The Prophet and the Church are charged with mourning for their nation.**
    - **The Prophet and the Church are also charged with bringing God’s Word to bear against the injustice and immoral behavior of its government...to deliver the message and then go back to praying for them and mourning over their rejection.**

- b. Prophets- for false teaching and for oppression and a display of piety. Vs. 5-7

**(1) See their hypocrisy- they preach peace to those who feed them and war to those who don't or can't. Just like in Jeremiah's day.**

**(2) See their judgment-vs. 6-7- because of their hypocrisy and their misuse of God's word chaos will ensue...consider- Prov. 29:18- *"Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law."***

**(3) They will be put to shame because of their false prophecy and they will be ruined.**

- **Even in our own day we see the fall of the clergy on a regular basis.**
- **And when they fall all clergy feel the brunt of the lack of trust from their flock.**
- **It is almost as if people are not even moved by it so much anymore. Scandals come and scandals go and life just goes on...and not much is done...but much will be done.**

- c. Elders/rulers- who oversee the day to day functions of the city and the Temple...and do nothing to change things...vs. 9-12

**(1) For the injustice of the magistrates.**

**(2) Judges who can be bought...**

**(3) Priests that teach for a price... if you pay me I will tell you "God's will" or anything else you want to know for today.**

**(4) Prophets that practice divination...if you pay me a price I will tell you "God's will" for your future.**

**(5) Priests and prophet pronounce God's blessings on the people seeking to convince them that all is well when destruction is at the door.**

- **They lie to the people...in the midst of detestable practices.**
- **They call evil good and good evil.**

3. What according to this chapter enables Micah to be so bold in his standing up to and proclaiming God's Word to these 3 groups without fear?

a. **See vs 8- This is Micah giving his qualifications if you will. Think Paul...**

b. **He had commission and instruction from God to say these things just as God had given them to him to say to the people He sent him to.**

c. **He carried out his mission in a higher Spirit and power than his own. Left to himself he may not have been so bold is the implication here...which is true for all of us.**

d. **He is given the role of prosecutor for God to bring them before God...and their charges have already been proven and sentence given by God.**

e. **He stands in juxtaposition to the prophets of 5-7.**

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

November 13, 2018

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. Remembering chapter 5, what point (s) is the prophet making to these people?
  - a. **Judgment is coming for all his children.**
  - b. **The Messiah's is up front and center as the crowning promise again...after a time of suffering/refining then the Messiah comes...then the Messiah Comes again!**
2. Last week, Andrew, when talking about what we see in verses 6-9 of chapter 5 said he saw "counter-attack" by God's people. In what ways, though out history do we see this occurring?
  - a. **In verses 9 as one put it in the class last night there is an image of "counter attack".**
    - (1) **Just like we saw in 4:13.**
    - (2) **We see an actual "counter-attack" with the Maccabean Revolution during the Intertestamental time.**
    - (3) **There is an on-going "counter-attack" from many corners in our own generation with the proclamation of the Word of God in opposition to the word and worldview of men...not real loud right now...but think Reformation, think Great Awakening...**
    - (4) **Then the ultimate "counter-attack" when Christ returns and has His ultimate victory**
  - b. **The ultimate good news!**
3. Remembering chapter 5, what is the prophet saying to us today? (Remember we are still living in the latter days...the last days that he is talking about.)

### C. Micah chapter 6

1. Visualizing is not always a safe thing to do...but...in what place does vs. 1-2 seem to be taking place in? **A Court Room!**
2. Why does it seem that way...and why would that be?
  - a. ***"Hear what the LORD says, Arise and plead your case..."***
    - (1) **First the prophet says, "Hear what the LORD says..." in other words, "Give your full attention to what is happening..." These are God's word and you must listen...you do not have a choice at this time.**
    - (2) **Israel is in court and God calls upon them to plead their case.**
    - (3) **The defense/accused is to testify as to their behavior.**
  - b. **Israel is to plead their case to, "... the mountains and let the hills hear your voice."** Who are the mountains and hills standing in for?
    - (1) **Unshakeable- eye witnesses.**
    - (2) **Jury**
    - (3) **There is also a play on words hear...they are to plead their case to mountains and hill who cannot "hear" and this testimony is coming from a people who refused to listen.**
    - (4) **As God brings His indictment against His people, and the trial begins... "He will contend with Israel."**

3. What is God doing in verses 3-5?
    - a. **He is laying out His indictment.**
    - b. **In vs. 3- He is challenging them to show cause as to why they have rejected him.**
      - (1) **What specifically has He done to them for them to reject Him? How have I wearied you?**
        - **They could SAY That God was a hard taskmaster, just like the fool in the parable of the talents, but just saying it doesn't make it so...so to their credit they were smart enough not to say that as the fool does in the NT.**
        - **God has in fact taken care of them...not with kit gloves but just as they have needed.**
      - (2) **The Hebrew word that is translated "*Answer me*" which is strong is may be translated... "*Testify Against Me!*" They are dumbfounded by the question and the command to testify against HIM...which is an indictment against them as well...for there is nothing they can say! God is always patient with His people but He is also JUST!**
      - (3) **Then He tells them what He did for their good in verses 4-5.**
    - (1) **He delivered/ redeemed them from the land of Egypt where they had been languishing...He actually fulfilled His promise to do that a promise He had made to Abraham in Gen. 15. So He is a covenant keeping God. He did good rather than evil to them...so they are without excuse.**
    - (2) **He provided godly leaders and examples for them.**
    - (3) **He talks about what happened between Balak and Balaam...**
      - **Every time Balak told Balaam to curse Israel...he ended up blessing them.**
      - **But then Balaam told Balak how to bring Israel under a curse...provide the Israelite men with Moabite women to cause them to sin...which Balak did and God did curse them with a plague that killed 24,000.**
      - **Numbers 25:1-9- "*While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel...***
      - **This action was a good action...They must remember that God could never bring curses upon His covenant children...His promise to them...unless they broke the covenant ...which they did. So when they feel cursed in any way it is their own doing. And in that... the people needed to know/ remember that God is a God of His word...He is righteous!**
- 
4. What is going in in verses 6-7?
  - a. **They appear frustrated...and call out to God, "What do you want from us?"**
  - b. **This is out of an act of resentment on their part. How can I say that?**
    - (1) **They know the LORD is there watching them.**

- (2) They also know to some degree what He requires...their language alone reveals that. It also reveals what they haven't been doing.
  - (3) So they are saying sarcastically and with disdain... "What would it have mattered, on one hand, when we did all these things...(though for the wrong reasons) then were weren't blessed as we thought we should be...so, What can we do now to appease the wrath of God?
  - (4) Even the disciples asked this question? - Matt. 19:23-26 *"And Jesus said to his disciples, 'Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.' When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, 'Who then can be saved?' But Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'"* The law and the rituals of the existing church wouldn't save them...only a changed heart done by God could save them.
  - (5) And they may have been saying as well... "On the other hand, we stopped following those rituals and did it ourselves and we prospered ...so are you mad now that we did it our way instead of yours?"
  - (6) They have gotten caught, but they are not contrite...they are stalling... "Tell us again what it takes to be saved." They know the answer for God has told them countless times throughout time...they have no excuse.
  - (7) They are seeking to bribe God with all that they have...you see and it has been said before, *"Men will part with anything but their sin!"*
5. Now we come to one of the most famous verses in the Bible- Micah 6:8. What stands out to you given that these people have seemingly just been shouting to God about what they could have done differently?
- a. **The Prophet stands up and says this is not the first time that they have been given an answer to that question.**
    - (1) God has told them what is GOOD. And what is good is that which brings God glory...which is a people who believe in Him and then keep His covenant.
    - (2) God has told them what He requires of them. The Pentateuch outlines what God expected of His people and how they are to love Him and love their neighbor.
    - (3) "He has told you, O man..." can mean the He has shown you, O Man...Or... He has made it plain, O Man...and who can question God in what He says? NOT THEM!
    - (4) But they had not listened!
    - (5) Even now, God is telling them and us that all offerings are nothing unless they come from a changed heart...and with that changed heart, that only comes from God alone, they can live as God expects. Just like the offerings of old ...they must be acceptable to God. The righteous will live by faith ...the unrighteous won't.



**b. But God being who He is tells them and us again... *“What does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”***

**(1) *“...to do justice...”***

- **Justice is the Hebrew word “mashpat” which literally means – “the way prescribed, the rightful action or the appropriate mode of life.”**
- **In the Bible, however, this word is linked with the principle of righteousness. In more than 60 passages across the OT and NT the Bible says that these 2 together hold the only legitimate way to secure life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The 2 go together one cannot be had without the other.**
  - **Ps. 89:14- *“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.”***
  - **Amos 5:24- *“But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”***
- **Any people who diligently seek to do right...as defined by God...will invariably pursue justice as well.**

**(2) *“...to love kindness/mercy...”***

- **Hebrew word “chesed” which literally means “goodness, kindness, loyal deeds, or faithfulness”.**
- **Again, in the Bible this word is linked with the exercise of authority. They go hand in hand as well. Biblical authority cannot be had apart from mercy.**
- **The Bible is clear; if we are ever to influence our families or our culture to stand for goodness, faithfulness, and kindness, then we must graciously serve the hurts, wants, and needs all around us. Just as God has shown mercy, we must demonstrate mercy to others.- II Cor. 1:3-7- *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.”***
- **Servanthood- the ministry of exercising mercy seems to be becoming more and more neglected in our culture and in the Church. Jesus made it clear that if the Christian Church wants to have any authority to speak truth into the lives of the people around us, to give moral vision to our culture, to shape civil justice we must serve. It is not about doing everything to gain power, rather it is to serve.**

- **Matthew 20:26-27- *"But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* And another time He told His disciples- Luke 6:36- *"Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."***
- **Serving as God describes and prescribes is how we authenticate and validate the claims of Scripture to a watching world. So we must serve backing up word with deed. James 2:14-17- *"What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."***

**(3) *"...to walk humbly with your God."***

- **Hebrew word "tsana" literally means- "a modest approach, to come appropriate with decorum, or to bring wisely"**
- **But as with the other words we have looked at the Bible uses this term to describe the proper attitude toward the person of God.**
- **To bring wisely ourselves before God captures the sense of this word...**
- **Think Rom. 12:1-2- *"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."* This is the wise approach.**
- **Richard Sibbes- *"A humble spirit is such a spirit in which God dwells."*- Is. 57:15- *"For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit (humble), to revive the spirit of the lowly (humble), and to revive the heart of the contrite.'"***
- **Spurgeon preaching on this passage said this: *"I would not advise any of you to try to be humble, but to be humble. As to acting humbly, when a man forces himself to it, that is poor stuff. When a man talks a great deal about his humility, when he is very humble to everybody, he is generally a canting hypocrite. Humility must be in the heart, and then it will come out spontaneously as the outflow of life in every act that a man performs."* And then he offered these:**
  - **Walk humbly when you are spiritually strong**
  - **Walk humbly when you have much work to do**
  - **Walk humbly in all your motives**
  - **Walk humbly studying God's word**
  - **Walk humbly when under trials**
  - **Walk humbly in your devotions**

- **Walk humbly between you and your brothers in Christ**
- **Walk humbly when dealing with sinners**
- **Touching on the point that this fundamental truth underlies the Christian Worldview since God is sovereign our whole life is to always be theocentric.**

6. Now God has proved His point...and they are nothing like what He had taught them re-stated in vs. 8 so what do we see in the remaining verses 9-16?

**a. After God has pointed out what He requires of His people, yet again, He now goes on to point out how they have not done those things.**

**(1) They have acted unjustly with everyone including their brothers and sisters...**

**(2) They have not shown mercy/ steadfast love.**

**(3) They have refused to walk humbly with their God...the God that they know according to their own testimony.**

**(4) They are idolatrous...simply because it has filled the void left behind by NOT doing as God has told them.**

**(5) Sooo... people will reproach them as the most hypocritical of all the people in the world.**

- **Even the pagans could see the hypocrisy, interesting...that God reveals such "truth" to them...common sense really!**

- **They claimed to be children of the Most High God but they hung out with the gods of their conquerors and people they conquered.**

**b. God's judgment!**

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
November 20, 2018

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Remembering chapter 6, what point (s) is the prophet making to these people?
2. Remembering chapter 6, what is the prophet saying to us today? (Remember we are still living in the latter days...the last days that he is talking about.)

C. Micah 7

1. Look at verses 1-7. How would you describe what is going on? **Let's classify this the way the church has classified this through the ages...This is Micah's song of lament.**
  - a. **Lament- feeling and expressions of grief and sorrow.**
  - b. **This is a lost art in the Western culture...rather than express our emotions we tend to hide them, distract ourselves from them...tell ourselves that we shouldn't "feel" these...so we pretend they don't exist.**
  - c. **Scripture is filled with laments not just so we can see how weak our predecessors were in their grief and misery...in fact, it isn't about that at all...it is about showing the appropriateness of lamenting and how to lament correctly before the LORD of glory which we will see here in our text. For there are usually 3 parts to a lament:**
    - (1) **Crying out to God...the lamenters of scripture don't clean themselves up first they come crying...no use to clean up God already knows what is going on See Ps. 6:6-7- *"I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping. My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows weak because of all my foes."* Or our text before us... *"Woe is me..."***
    - (2) **Asking God for help- expectantly.**
    - (3) **Responding in trust and praise- look at verse 7.**
  - d. **Carl Trueman (an English Reformed theologian) has said, *"The church in the West has lost its capacity for lamentation. It has drunk so deeply at the well of modern western materialism that it simply does not know what to do with such cries and regards them as little short of embarrassing. A diet of unremittingly jolly choruses and hymns inevitably creates an unrealistic horizon of expectation which sees the normative Christian life as one long triumphalist street party, a theologically incorrect and a pastorally disastrous scenario in a world of broken individuals."***
  - e. **You see what he's saying. If we've lost our capacity for lamentation, if the vocabulary of our worship and our prayer lives is only ever upbeat and happy go-lucky, we're left without words when things go horribly wrong, when unexpected sorrow lances our hearts and tragedy strikes like lightning as it sometimes does, like a bolt out of the blue.**

- f. Lamentation gives us vocabulary when sorrow penetrates our own lives and tools for ministry when it penetrates the lives of others. And so, we need to relearn it. Micah chapter 7, 1 through 7, is a song of lamentation.**
- g. But we mustn't misunderstand. You see, there is a difference between lamentation and abject despair - you can see it if you look at verse 7.**
- (1) Lamentation, you see, knows where to turn with tears.**
  - (2) Lamentation knows what to do when sorrow pierces our lives.**
  - (3) Look at verse 7 again. *"As for me, I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me."***
    - You might not know why God is doing what He's doing in your life.**
    - You may not know how or even if it will ever end. It feels heavy and hard and sore.**
    - But lamentation is faith that runs to God with the trial/grief/deep sorrow/severe providence of God and pours that out before Him instead of running away from Him because of the trial. That's what Micah is doing here. His heart is breaking for the condition of His people. He's lamenting. But true lamentation runs to God with grief rather than away from Him which is despair.**
- h. One last thing concerning verse 7,**
- (1) Micah does not say, "My God will fix me," or "My God will change my circumstances, deliver me from the sources of my sorrows."**
  - (2) Micah says, *"My God will hear me."***
  - (3) Why does he put it this way? What does he want us to know that is even more important?**
    - Sometimes that's what we need most urgently, is to be heard! We may not need a solution to our sorrows but to know that we've been really heard, really heard.**
    - That as we pour out of grief, as we throw our "whys" at the heavens, that there is One seated on the throne who really understands.**
    - He hears us which enables us to endure...because sometimes that is what it is about...not getting fixed...not having our circumstances changed...but the witness we have in sorrow and struggle for those who are grieving as well.**
- 2. What would you say Micah is doing in verses 8-13?**
- a. Vs. 8 seems to be him preaching to his enemies...vs. 10 seems to be him preaching about his enemies to someone else...**
  - b. But I believe that he is preaching to himself and to any who might be listening...which is unlikely...**

**(1) If you read through this section, it seems to read almost like a creed. Micah is reciting for Himself... for the strengthening of his own faith - great central truths about the reliability and the grace of God. If we look at each verse from that vantage point, I believe we can see it...**

- Look at verse 8. Here's a promise worth clinging to, worth preaching to our hearts in the darkest of our days. ***"When I fall, I shall rise. When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me."***
- How much better we would all be if we would simply remember those lines and repeat them to ourselves often? ***"When I fall, I will rise. When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me."***
- There is no gloom so deep and impenetrable into which, in God's providence, you may descend that the light of His truth and grace cannot guide you through. ***"When I fall, I shall rise. When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me."***
- Look at verse 9, here Micah gives us some real help when we endure providential sorrows and sufferings and the Lord disciplines us by them and begins to uncover, as often takes place in our hearts as Christians, layers of secret sin.
  - They all start coming to the surface, don't they? They bubble up and He exposes the deep, hidden idols of our hearts.
  - What do you do when God puts His finger on your sin? Look at verse 9. ***"I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against Him"*** - so there's Micah's posture. There are consequences because of my sin. God is disciplining me, and I will bear up under the discipline and rebuke of God in meekness. ***"Until He pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon His vindication."***

**(2) Every verse tells a similar thing of what he believes...creedally he gives us an example of proclaiming out loud to our own hearts what we believe that enables us to keep going when all around us seems to be in chaos.**

3. With all of this set up...lamentation and preaching to himself the truths he knows so well...what is he doing now in verses 14-17? **Praying for God's protection and deliverance!**
  - a. He takes us back to the image of Shepherd...think Ps. 23.
    - (1) The Lord is our Shepherd...and so the prophet calls upon God to do as He has promised especially in light of how the shepherds of God's people are failing in this for their people.
    - (2) With rod and staff He will protect and deliver us from enemies within and without.
  - b. When God Shepherds His people again the nations will take notice just like they had in the past.
    - (1) When God brought His people back from Persia (formally Babylon) He gave them a job to do which people noticed.
    - (2) The people of the land petitioned the then king...and the king was almost willing to attack until he was directed by God to the decree of Cyrus...all by God's doing...so you don't mess with God's people when it is evident that He has their back.

- c. Interestingly in verse 15 the speaker changes.
- (1) In verse 14, Micah is praying, but in verse 15, God answers. *"As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I, the Lord, will show them marvelous things. The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; they shall lay their hands on their mouths; their ears shall be deaf; they shall lick the dust like a serpent, like the crawling things of the earth; they shall come trembling out of their strongholds; they shall turn in dread to the Lord our God, and they shall be in fear of you."* Just like in the day when they came out of Egypt...the peoples of the land feared them because their God fought for them and gained victory over every place they put their feet...by promise to Joshua.
  - (2) The Lord is going to bring a new exodus, a new deliverance for His people, and He will bring judgment upon the nations that will not bend the knee to Him.
4. So now as we look at verses 18-20, what is he communicating to them and to us?
- a. Micah hears the response of God that He gave in verses 5-17 and the rest of the chapter gives way to praise. Verse 18 *"Who is a God like You?"*
    - (1) You are utterly unique. There's no one to compare with You.
    - (2) And what is it that registers with Micah, that compels him to the celebration of the uniqueness of the living God?
      - *"Who is a God like you, who pardons iniquity and passes over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?"*
      - *He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in steadfast love.*
      - *He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities underfoot.*
      - *You/He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*
      - *You/He will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old."*
  - b. Micah can't help it.
    - (1) It is the extraordinary news that in the face of the hateful wickedness of His people, in the face even of Micah's own acknowledged sin, that God delights to save sinners. He forgives. He blots out iniquity.
    - (2) Like a defeated enemy, He tramples our transgressions under His feet. Like a pebble dropped into the ocean, our sins will sink out of sight before Him.
    - (3) That's what makes Micah's heart sing in praise.
5. As we wrap this book up, Nan, asked me a great question after the meeting last week. Where is Jesus in all of this...this whole book? Since all the Scriptures point to Him...where is He in this prophesy?
- a. The specific prophecies about the Messiah's birth in chapters 4-5.
  - b. The statements that are made throughout concerning the futility of works righteousness. So if our works are not good enough what ... or

**who can be good enough? Only through the sacrifice of the Messiah and His paying the price for our sin...only the righteous One can do this work....the Messiah that we know as Jesus Christ.**

- c. Christ is the Word of God...this is the Word of God which always reveals God's purposes through time...His covenant of redemption and this revelation...this prophecy is part of that message.**
- d. In the latter days the nations will come...God's elect children from every nation, tongue and tribe...will be drawn into the Church of Jesus Christ.**
- e. Does this make your heart sing to know that today, you are ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven?**
- f. Does it make your heart sing that because of His obedience and blood today you stand robed with righteousness, justified, accepted in the beloved, and clean in God's sight?**
- g. How do you fight fear in your heart? Micah says you fight fear by singing praise.**



## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

January 15, 2020

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

11. We will look at the books in chronological order not canonical as they are found in your Bibles:

- m. Jonah- 9th or 8th Cent. Prophet (probably early 8th Cent. 790's)- Northern Kingdom
- n. Amos- 8th Cent. Prophet- prophet to the Northern Kingdom
- o. Hosea- 8th Cent. Prophet (750 -730 or so)-prophet in the Northern Kingdom
- p. Micah- 8th Cent. Prophet (750-686 somewhere in there)- Judah
- q. Nahum- 7th Cent. Prophet (660-650)- Judah
- r. Zephaniah- 7th Cent. Prophet- (640-615 or so)- Judah
- s. Habakkuk- 7th Cent. Prophet (609-598)- Judah
- t. Joel- 6th Cent. Prophet (520-500 or so)- Northern Kingdom
- u. Obadiah- 6th Cent. Prophet (550's)- Judah
- v. Haggai- 6th Cent. Prophet (520-5 or 6 months)- prophet of the restoration
- w. Zechariah- 6th Cent. Prophet (along with Haggai )- prophet of the restoration
  - (3) Ezra- 5th Century priest after the exile
  - (4) Nehemiah- 5th Century Governor after the exile.(430-400)
    - I will be including Ezra and Nehemiah in our study just before Malachi since this is where they are most pertinent for our study rather than beginning with them in canonical order
    - I include these not because they are prophets in the usual sense but because they affirm and confirm what the prophets spoke of during this time of the 6th and 5th Century BC.
    - These 2 books are one book in the Hebrew Scriptures...considered to be part of the historical section of the OT.
- x. Malachi- 5th Cent. Prophet (460-400 or so )- prophet of the restoration.

12. So far we have looked at Jonah, Amos, Hosea, and Micah. If you were to sum up in a few words the themes of these Minor Prophets what would you say?

**Judgment and Restoration.**

13. What are somethings that you would say that we are being taught about our own time from these that we have looked at so far?

### C. Nahum

1. What are we told about Nahum in the Scriptures?

- a. **Not much...**
- b. **We are told his name and where he is from- Elkosh all in the first verse of his book.**
  - i. **This is the only mention of Nahum in all the Bible.**
  - ii. **Elkosh could refer to where he was born or from where he prophesied.**
    - **No one is actually sure where this little hamlet is.**

- Some speculate that it is a little place in Southern Judah supposedly near Micah's hometown of Moresheth.
  - No one is certain where Elkosh is except for the random verse in chapter 1 verse 15 that may be pointing to where he is prophesying from...Judah.
- c. His name means "comfort" or "compassion" or "consolation".
- (1) Interesting irony given his "message"... "oracle and vision" .
- A message of destruction for the Assyrians...
  - But a message of consolation and comfort for ....the Jews.
    - a. This enemy that had been plaguing them would be dealt with decisively just as God said they would.
    - b. They would be relieved of a source of constant stress and anxiety.
- ii. God is always with His people to keep them in the loop.
- d. Given the vast amount of historical data most people find it easy to conclude that Nahum is definitely a 7<sup>th</sup> Century BC prophet...maybe even the first one of the 7<sup>th</sup> Century.
- i. Chapter 1 spends a lot of time talking about Sennacherib and what happens when He runs through Judah in his campaign against Judah and is stopped at Jerusalem in 701 BC.
  - ii. Vs. 3:6-7 speaks of the fall of Nineveh which occurred around 612 BC which he seems to be prophesying that is yet to happen.
  - iii. Vs. 3:8 Nahum gives us an event in time... the capture of Thebes by the Assyrian ruler Ashurbanipul in 663 BC which Nahum indicates was a past event in his time. This is a time where Ashur... accomplished what his father and grandfather could not accomplish...he subjugated Egypt and Judah making them vassals of his rule.
  - iv. The man who wrote this prophecy evidently knew something about Sennacherib's attack upon Jerusalem. It seems to be an eyewitness account that is given in the first chapter. When Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Judah during the reign of Hezekiah, Nahum was probably an eyewitness. This would mean that Nahum was a contemporary of both Isaiah and Micah.
  - v. So it seems clear that Nahum prophesied sometime between that even occurring and the last even...so maybe late 8<sup>th</sup> Century into early 7<sup>th</sup> Century...that is why some will say he was the 1<sup>st</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> century prophet.
- e. Prophesied in the days of King Manasseh of Judah a vassal of Assyria.
2. Just look at the first verse, what do you see?
- a. A dual title- *"An oracle concerning Nineveh. The book of vision of Nahum of Elkosh."* Now what is that about?
- (1) An oracle is a word of judgment...in this case against Nineveh 150 plus or minus years after Jonah.
- (2) A vision usually refers to a supernatural way to receive God's Word/prophecy through an internal insight or hearing. See Hebrews 1:1, *"Long ago, at many times and in many (diverse) ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets..."*

**(3) In this case, with these two taken together it seems clearly to emphasize the wrath that was coming to Nineveh and to the Assyrian Kingdom...**

**b. "An oracle concerning Nineveh."**

**(1) Nineveh was a great city and the Assyrian Empire was a great empire in scope and size....and it was to fall...**

**(2) It has been said before that the fall of great cities ought to disturb us...like the fall of Rome ...the fall of Saigon in 1975...But the fall of Nineveh is largely unknown so its fall means very little to us...but it meant a lot to a particular people...the Israelites.**

**(3) This city seems to have been among some of the original cities...Gen. 10:8-12 tells us, "*Cush (son of Ham) fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord.' The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.*"**

- **Don't let the mighty man of the LORD throw you...he was a despot responsible for the first world dictatorial empire.**
- **Babylon and Nineveh were his principle cities.**
- **As we have seen when we study Jonah...Nineveh was defined by human violence and conquest....warfare of man against men. Babylon here and later comes to represent the warfare of man against God.**

**(4) In world history other than the Bible we see the first mention of this city in the Code of Hammurabi around 2200 BC.**

- **Hammurabi claims kingship of the city at the time.**
- **He instituted goddess worship of Ishtar ( ) in Nineveh.**
  - a. Queen of Heaven**
  - b. Goddess of love, fertility, beauty, war , justice and political power...**
  - c. A precursor goddess to the Greek goddess Aphrodite.**
  - d. This goddess following would be almost eradicated by the spread of Christianity.**
- **For close to 1000 years not much is heard from this region until God raises them up in the late 900's BC with the Assyrian Empire...much of the history we read about in the Bible corresponds with the rest of world history as well till their destruction.**
- **Under Sennacherib the city that had existed from almost the beginning of time became a city of unparalleled strength and splendor.**
  - e. It was known as the largest city in the world at the time...no one could match its glory....Jonah tells us that it was a city of 3 days journey across it...it would have only gotten bigger in a hundred plus years...some say as much as 10 times bigger...certainly making it possibly the biggest city of the day**

- f. And as is noted here in the text before us it seems to have gotten more wicked as the years went by and then less than 90 years after the siege of Jerusalem that didn't end well for Sennacherib's army in 701- the city would fall and never to rise again to the splendor it had once enjoyed...per God's providential plan.**

**(5) The rest of the story...archeological stuff...**

- **The city was formally destroyed...sacked and burned...in 612 BC by a combined force of Babylonians, Persians, Medes and Scythian mercenaries.**
- **The city was "re-discovered" – uncovered and excavated in 1846-47. They had been previously "lost". While there are many other cities of that period recognizable by their ruins...there was no trace of Nineveh until then.**
- **At its re-discovery it seems that what we know as the Hanging Gardens of Babylon may have actually been located in Nineveh constructed by Sennacherib for his amusement. At the very least, he had this type of garden first.**
- **Also, the excavation site is referred to by mounds which cover it.**
  - g. The Kuyunjik mound has been excavated which has enable archeologist to determine the vast size of the city and its cultural significance.**
  - h. The Nebi Yumus mound which interestingly translates "the Prophet Jonah" remains untouched because it is an Islamic shrine to the prophet with a cemetery having also been built there dating from the mid-600's AD when Islam took over the area.**
- **Today, the ruins are in danger of the city of Mosul's growth with many of the existing artifacts having been destroyed or stolen by terrorists and vandals. It is listed among the Top 10 endangered sites in the world.**

**14. Look at verses 2 and 3a.**

- a. Describe for me the attributes of God that are highlighted. What are they communicating to them...Ninevites and to His children?**

**i. "The LORD- Yahweh is..."**

- **The covenantal God will keep His promise to deal with these people just as had been prophesied from the Pentateuch through to Isaiah and other Minor prophets.**
- **The covenant God is seeking to encourage Judah and us as well that He is with them.**

**ii. "Jealous"= this is God's zealousness against anything that infringes upon His character or His children.**

- **This is a good jealousy one that we have hard time balancing.**
- **This may be being used to anthropomorphize the person of God...but most theologians consider this to be an attribute stemming from His holiness.**
- **See Exodus 20: 4-5; Exodus 34:14; Deut. 4:24**

- iii. Judge- ***“Avenging...avenging...vengeance”***.
  - 3fold certainty that no sin will go unpunished.
  - Communicates that His justice is right, certain and complete.
  - No one will escape!
- iv. Patient- ***“Slow to anger...great in power...will by no means clear the guilty.”***
  - OT- Ex. 34:6-7; NT similar sentiment- Eph. 5:3-6; Col. 3:5-6
  - His justice is predetermined ...is final ...and unstoppable...but He had been patient.
  - God by His “common grace” is patient even with sinners of all stripes...but His patience will end against the guilty.
- b. Why are these particular attributes important for them and us to know?
- c. Doesn't this support the worlds and many in the Churches claim that the God of the Old Testament is worse than the God of the New Testament as represented by Jesus? How would you defend such a claim with this passage staring you in the face?

**15.** What things is he communicating in verses 3b-6?

- a. **You certainly don't want to be the target of His vengeance.**
- b. **The gods of nature are nothing in comparison to His power.**
- c. **Nature is but His plaything or in this case an instrument of judgment.**
- d. **God coming in judgment is something that will even frighten the mountains...this type of hyperbole is used to make the point clearly that a wrathful God is one to which is too much for us if even the mountains can't take His anger.**
- e. **Our God is a consuming fire!**
- f. **The people would recognize these phrases that represent their God's sovereignty and power and How He is greater than all other gods by His own decree and admission.**

**16.** What is going on in verse 7?

- a. ***“The LORD is good”***- What all does this short phrase communicate?
  - i. **The LORD =Yahweh that covenantal God...the one who before the foundations of the earth established and implemented His plan and promise for the redemption of His people. He is the One who IS!**
  - ii. **He defines “good”. Good=God...God =Good! It is His very nature.**
  - iii. **He sets the standard for good...Himself...pretty high standard.**
  - iv. **Good in this case speaks to the 3 “P's” we talked about- Protection, Provision and Punishment.**
  - v. **Vs. 3 said that the LORD is slow to anger...in other words He is patient...which is one of the things that defines His goodness.**
    - He is long-suffering even with His enemies.
    - He is benevolent with all His creation.
    - He is righteous toward all.
    - Common grace is real otherwise it would be all over.
    - But when the time is up for His enemies it is up..just like it soon will be for Assyria...they are no longer useful in God's plan.

- b. ***“...a stronghold in the day of trouble...”*** what does that mean to you in your day?
      - i. **Only His Elect will and can seek refuge!**
      - ii. **Refuge is available in the LORD to His Elect.**
      - iii. **For His own He is a refuge...but for His enemies...see vs. 8.**
    - c. ***“He knows those who take refuge in Him.”*** What is the LORD saying here through His prophet to the prophet and to us?
      - i. ***“Knows” is a word of extreme intimacy as a husband “knows” his wife intimately...God our heavenly Father knows everything about us...everything.***
      - ii. ***Jesus said in John 10, “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.” Just as He and the Father are One and know themselves that is how much He knows us.***
      - iii. **This should be comforting because every living person wants to be known.**

17. According to verses 8-13 how well does He know His enemy and what is His plan for them?

  - a. **He knows His enemy for He is the One who raised them up for His work.**
  - b. **He knows their leader for He placed Him in power to do what He has done as punishment on His people.**
    - i. **Vs. 11 speaks of Sennacherib and His plot to overthrow Jerusalem. For further study see II Kings 18.**
    - ii. **God brought him to Jerusalem to be utterly defeated.**
  - c. **All the strategies of men will not prevail for long because their “power” is given to them by God and when He removes that from them they are powerless. See II Kings 19:35-37.**
  - d. **God will raise up Babylon to deal with Assyria...and to ultimately deal with the sins of His people in Judah.**
  - e. **He will break the yoke of the Assyrians off His children. He will destroy the Ninevites.**
  - f. **This is happening by God’s direction and by His foreordination. See Matt. 25:41, 46- *“Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (vs. 41) And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (vs. 46)***

18. Now we come to the end of this chapter, what is he saying from the LORD in verses 14-15?

  - a. **This seems to be a direct curse upon Sennacherib but of course this is against the nation as well.**
    - i. **He will and did have sons...but His house would be permanently disgraced especially after his defeat at Jerusalem...**

- ii. The Assyrian empire would cease to exist...Persian people would continue but their power and influence would never be the same.**
- b. He will even cut off their idols that supposedly gave them their power...actually God's usefulness for them (who was their strength) has run out.**
  - i. This could be talking about Sennacherib's personal god**
  - ii. Or it could be talking about Sennacherib's personal "worship chapel"- where his sons would kill him**
- c. They will be destroyed utterly to the grave...the kingdom will not rise again as it was.**
- d. Deliverance is promised to God's people.**
  - i. See Isaiah 52:7- bringing the good news in the Old Testament times in preparation for Christ's first coming.**
  - ii. Romans 10:15- proclamation of the gospel based on Christ's first Coming looking forward to His second coming.**
- e. He is commanding Israel to do as God has commanded and all will go well for them.**
  - i. Worship Him as He prescribes... through the feast He gave to them...not others.**
  - ii. Keep faith with Him as His people.**
  - iii. Keep your vows!- Do what you profess...live what you say you believe.**
  - iv. And Sennacherib and those like him won't pass through you.**

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
January 22, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. There is a lot going on in this first chapter. What is he saying to the Ninevites?
2. What is he saying to his people?
3. What attributes of God were highlighted in the first chapter?
4. I just briefly mentioned last week that Nahum prophesied during the reign of Manasseh, king of Judah...what was significant about that?
  - a. **Nahum preached during the reign of King Manasseh, one of the most evil kings in Judah's long history,**
    - (1) **This was a man who needed the pain of his own experience (literally captured put into chains and taken to Babylon by the Assyrians) to teach him the lessons of being a good king.**
    - (2) **Commentator J. Barton Payne suggests that Manasseh's great conversion took place late in his reign, around 648 BC, a mere half-dozen years before his death.**
    - (3) **He tore down the idols he had had put up, restored temple worship and commanded the people to worship the One True God as he was doing...but little changed with the people.**
  - b. **That means Nahum preached during one of the darkest, if not the darkest periods in Judah's history, as well; a time filled with idolatry of all kinds in a nation that had completely turned its back on God. The Lord's willingness to send Nahum, whose name means "comfort," into such a hopeless situation evidences His unrelenting and overwhelming grace.**

C. Nahum 2 and 3-

1. What is being declared in these 2 chapters? **God's utter judgement upon the Assyrian Empire.**
2. Look at how specific this passage is...almost as if he was an eyewitness to the fall of Nineveh. Nahum doesn't need to be an eye witness...remember this was a "burden/oracle" and it was a vision. But this is what history tells us happened almost exactly the same account as Scripture.
  - a. **The scatterer comes against Nineveh... Medes, Babylonians/ Chaldeans, Persians, and Scythians.**
  - b. **The Medes and the Babylonians and their mercenaries were known to place "blood" or red die on their shields for intimidation.**
  - c. **The Babylonians and their allies were known for their great uniforms. The officers were actually clothed in blood red to show their greatness and invincibility.**
    - (1) **They were striking ...much like the red coats of the English.**
    - (2) **But they also covered up wounds so their men would not lose heart and they would appear to have not sustained any wounds.**



- d. **A group sets up a siege tower and they laid siege to the city for 3 months.**
  - e. **The Tigris River gates are opened wide and the city is flooded.**
  - f. **Assyrian Troops would man the ramparts and the wall...but to no avail...their doom was set...the battle decided by God before it even began.**
  - g. **The enemies chariots (the best of the day) raced freely through the streets and these chariots had places built into them to carry torches so they could fire everywhere they passed.**
  - h. **The officers and soldiers are so excited about their victory that they even stumble in their haste to impress their leaders.**
  - i. **Nineveh is plundered of all their wealth...they may have been a trade capital but the Babylonian/Chaldean army was consumed with Nineveh's destruction...something their king Nabopolassar and his son Nebuchadnezzar wanting for some time... and its wealth of which there was such a vast amount was divided between the conquering forces.**
  - j. **There was so much death and destruction that just like it says here horses and chariots would roll over the piles and piles of bodies just to get from one place to another.**
  - k. **The destruction was going to be worse than that of Thebes...**
  - l. **Everyone will be thankful for her destruction...not just Judah but all the nations she had plundered.**
3. A few observations that we will not have time to cover...
- a. **As I said before Babylon along with the Chaldeans hated the Assyrian rule over them....the Medes and everyone else seems to have been jealous of their wealth and power.**
  - b. **Nebuchadnezzar's father, Nabopolassar was made king by the Assyrian ruler of the city of Babylon and from that time on he conspired to destroy Nineveh.**
  - c. **Assyria was like many nations extremely protective of the purity of their ethnicity which meant punishing all other ethnicities in one way or another.**
  - d. **God not only used this hatred ...it was probably God who placed it there in the first place as He was preparing to use him and His son next in His punishment of Judah for their idolatry.**
  - e. **Chapter 2:7 seems to be speaking of the queen of the city or the queen of the Empire...but it is more likely just talking about its beauty and its wealth and the caretakers of these things...since there were so many wives...**
  - f. **Then there is the whole discussion concerning lions in 2:11-12. This is obviously not a commentary on the animal world since it is more often than not the lioness who does the "lion" share of the hunting and provision for the whole family. This seems to be more of a metaphor of how the princes of Assyria as they prowled around looking for anyone to pounce upon. See Isaiah 5:29-30.**
  - g. **2:13 is obviously the "death-nail"...if anyone was wondering!**
  - h. **Chapter 3 is simply a commentary of what more will happen based on God declaration in 2:13.**

4. Why is Nahum so important?
  - a. **Nahum's singular focus on the impending judgment of Nineveh offers a continuation of the story that began in Jonah. Sometime around 800 BC, God sent Jonah to Nineveh to preach repentance and hope to the Assyrian people, a message they heard and adopted—at least for a time.**
  - b. **150 plus or minus years later, during the time of Nahum, the Assyrians had returned to their bullish ways, conquering the northern kingdom of Israel and lording their power over Judah in the south (2 Kings 17:1–6; 18:13–19:37).**
  - c. **When God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and to bring a message there, a remarkable thing happened—the entire city turned to God—100 percent. Frankly, there has never been anything quite like it in the history of the world. We simply do not seem to have anything else that could compare to an entire city, 100 percent, turning to God. How far-reaching it was in the nation I do not know, but certainly Nineveh, as the capital city, had a tremendous effect upon the nation, and there was a great turning to God in that day.**
  - d. **Jonah failed to realize what Nahum reminded the people of Judah: God's justice is always right and always sure. Should He choose to grant mercy for a time, that good gift will not compromise the Lord's ultimate sense of justice for all in the end. We have seen God's patience before.**
  
5. But...what's the big deal? All of this stuff happened so long ago?
  - a. **God keep's His promise to judge the Assyrians.**
    1. **God sent Jonah to Nineveh... there is nothing in this text that even gives us a hint that Nahum went anywhere near Nineveh.**
    2. **Many have speculated why God didn't send him as He did Jonah and the easiest answer is this:**
      - **At first, with Jonah they were “ignorant” to the person of God.**
      - **But now it is different they have had the light and rejected it. They have known the truth and have chosen the ways of their fathers before Jonah.**
      - **The story is told to illustrate this by a preacher of old: *Assyria had had light—God had sent a message to them—and for a while they turned and served the living and true God. It was a revival in the common sense of the term. It was wonderful, but it didn't last. Isn't that really the history of revivals? At the same time that France had a revolution, England had a revival under the Wesley's and Whitefield. There was a great turning to God, but how did England make out? Well, look at her today. At that time they were a first-rate nation. They were number one among the great nations of the world, but they are not number one today. They aren't number two; they aren't even number three. They are way down on the list today. What happened? They departed from the living and true God. He goes on- The first time I visited England, I asked my guide to take me to the cemetery across from Wesley's church where Wesley is buried. The guide had difficulty. He and the driver talked it over, looked at the city map, and finally wound their way through the streets of London until we arrived at the place. The guide***

***said to me, "This is the first time I've ever brought anyone here. I think I will put it on our route and will bring people here when we take tours. I didn't know it was here." England had forgotten John Wesley. They had forgotten the great revival that took place under him. As a result, she has sunk down to a very low level for a nation which has had such a tremendous history. Those of us who had ancestors in the British Isles—whether in England, Wales, Scotland, or Ireland—have to bow our heads today in shame. We feel like weeping when we think of the greatness of that nation and how at one time they listened to the voice of God. How like Nineveh! When Nineveh was no longer listening.***

3. After ordaining approximately two hundred years of powerful Assyrian kings and rulers, God announced through Nahum His plans to judge the city of Nineveh.
  4. While the book as a whole clearly shows God's concern over sin, His willingness to punish those guilty of wickedness, and His power to carry out His desire for judgment, it also contains rays of hope shining through the darkness.
- b. God keeps his promise to watch over His chosen people. The people of Judah would have immediately taken hope in the idea that Nineveh, their primary oppressor for generations, would soon come under judgment from God.
6. Where in this book do we see God's grace toward His own?
- a. His slowness to anger/His patience (Nahum 1:3).
  - b. His goodness and strength (1:7).
  - c. His promise to judge His enemies- (Nahum 1:12)
  - d. His covenantal promise displayed- (1:15)
    - (1) This is actually as much a warning to them as it is a gift of God's grace.
    - (2) If Judah would only keep their part of the covenant...keeping the feasts of the LORD and their vows then God would be with them as their God...bringing good news and publishing peace among them.
    - (3) This verse is written in covenantal language in the Hebrew implying blessings and consequences. Interesting vs. 15 in the English is actually 2:1 in the Hebrew.
  - e. His restorative power (2:2).
    - (1) The first words in the Hebrew could be easily translated, "For the Lord will revenge the pride of Jacob..."
    - (2) God is an avenging God. He used Assyria to decimate Israel and to subjugate Judah but now He is punishing Assyria for their usefulness is used up.
    - (3) While they deserved God's wrath that is still awhile off...there obviously were still some to come to faith.

7. How can this book aid our growth in faith?
- a. **No doubt we all have felt overwhelmed by the darkness both within ourselves and in our world. Nahum lived in a dark time, a time in which the faithful few must have wondered how long they would have to resist cultural and spiritual compromise.**
    - (1) Have you ever found your will to do what's right weakening as you became discouraged with what you saw in your life and in the world around you? How do you endure such times?**
    - (2) The prophet Nahum reminds us of God's active hand, working even in the darkest of times to bring justice and hope throughout the world.**
  - b. **We see His sovereignty over all...the most powerful nations at the time rise and fall by His foreordination.**
  - c. **We see God's forbearance and love.**
  - d. **We see His holiness which cannot and will not tolerate wickedness forever.**
  - e. **We see that His judgement is neither capricious nor careless...it is after all, like Him... GOOD!**

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
January 29, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. In a couple of words ...what is Nahum about?
2. How can this book of gloom and doom be an aid to our growth and our mission for God?
  - f. **To fear Him rightly!**
  - g. **No doubt we all have felt overwhelmed by the darkness both within ourselves and in our world. Nahum lived in a dark time, a time in which the faithful few must have wondered how long they would have to resist cultural and spiritual compromise.**
    - (3)**Have you ever found your will to do what's right weakening as you became discouraged with what you saw in your life and in the world around you? How do you endure such times?**
    - (4)**The prophet Nahum reminds us of God's active hand, working even in the darkest of times to bring justice and hope throughout the world.**
  - h. **We see His sovereignty over all...the most powerful nations at the time rise and fall by His foreordination.**
  - i. **We see God's forbearance and love.**
  - j. **We see His holiness which cannot and will not tolerate wickedness forever.**
  - k. **We see that His judgement is neither capricious nor careless...it is after all, like Him... GOOD!**

C. Zephaniah

1. Introduction
  - a. What does the text tell us about Zephaniah the prophet?
    - (1) **We know he is a prophet because of the formal pronouncement of that with the phrase *"The word of the Lord came to Zephaniah..."* and it may be that he had been one for a while.**
    - (2) **We also know that he didn't come up with this on his own...this is the Word of the LORD that came to him from the LORD. This may seem simple, but given the number of people that have through history talked about the Bible being written simply by men...that these guys came up with this all by themselves like a fortune teller that writes...then details like this are ultimately important at least to His children.**
    - (3) **He gives a lineage which is uncommon for the prophets...this seems to be done because he was of a certain pedigree... like Isaiah he was a member of the royal line... He was the son of Cushi...who was the son of Gedaliah...who was the son of Amariah whose father was Hezekiah. So God calls His prophets from all walks of life.**
    - (4) **His name is "simple"...well sort of:**
      - i. **Zephaniah means simply "Yahweh hides"- which might communicate that that which Yahweh has hidden He reveals through Zephaniah, in the way that at Christ's coming many of**

**the “mysteries” of the LORD were revealed. As in One who is revealer of secrets or hidden things of the LORD.**

- ii. But depending upon where the accent is in the first part of his name it could also be translated “Yahweh’s lookout as in watchtower man”**

**b. What does the text tell us about when he prophesied?**

- 1. Given that the text tells us that the Word of the LORD came to him during the reign of Josiah...we know that he worked sometime between or during 640-609 BC, the years of Josiah’s reign.**

- a. Many proven and tested scholars have speculated that Zephaniah began prophesying at the beginning of Josiah’s reign because it seems that many of the things the prophet spoke to that needed to be done he and Josiah may have done together...at the very least it looks as though Josiah had him and began to make the changes necessary when he was old enough to do so.**

- b. But it could be towards the end of Josiah’s reign after the people have slipped back into their idolatrous ways which means they need to hear once again the coming wrath of God (God has not done it yet...so those who are His will still come to a saving knowledge beforehand...but the rest...seem unreformable. This timeline actually seems more plausible. Matthey henry says- *“What good can the best reformers/preachers do when people hate to be reformed?”***

- 2. Interesting enough this prophecy seems to have come before the destruction of the Assyrian Empire...maybe even before the destruction of Nineveh itself (2:13-14) this should dispel any idle speculations that Zephaniah prophesied at any other time than during Josiah’s reign.**

- 3. This is also during the prophet Jeremiah’s time as well. Jeremiah began prophesying in and around 627...and he preached his funeral gave a song of lament at Josiah’s funeral. The Word of the LORD came to Jeremiah at that time for Josiah and again to Jehoiakim son of Josiah after the king of Egypt made him king over his brother and then again during the reign of Zedekiah, son of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah who had been put in place by Nebuchadnezzar just before the fall of Jerusalem and Judah.**

**2. Chapter 1-**

**a. What do we see in verses 2-3?**

- (1)Judgment...he doesn’t preface this declaration. He doesn’t apologize or feel bad to jump right in to this utter judgment.**

- (2)He abruptly gets to the point...that utter destruction is coming to Judah but it wouldn’t happen for yet 30 to 40 years...there will be a major problem with the Babylonians in and around 597 BC but the city finally falls in 587 BC when nothing will remain untouched by the Babylonians.**

- (3)This passage speaks of God preparing soon to take away His blessings...all of them replacing them with His wrath. God says;“I will utterly sweep away...I will sweep away... I will sweep away...” Three times He declares that He will sweep away.**

- i. **The Hebrew could be “I will utterly consume all things...**
  - ii. **He will utterly sweep away everything**
  - iii. **Sweep away man and beast**
  - iv. **He will sweep away the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea and the rubble (read idols) with all the wicked.**
  - (4) **What other events in history does this sound like?**
  - v. **Sounds like what He did in the flood. Genesis 6:1-17**
  - vi. **This is the beginning of a prophesies that God gave to Moses in Lev. 26:14-45**
  - vii. **Sounds like what He is going to do at the end of time as Christ returns.... All things will be made new....and this time He will burn it all up beforehand.**
- b. **What is he saying in 4-6?**
- (1)He is bringing judgment because of idolatry.**
  - (2)The first 2 verses could have been seen as some kind of generic judgment at some generic time.**
  - (3)Think of what happened to the priest of Baal in Elijah’s time...this seems to be a never ending cycle for the “priests” of false gods.**
  - (4)Think of the priest during Amos’ time and the curse that came with his rejection of the prophets Words and the rejection of God. Amos 7.**
  - (5)But these verses become especially specific...God is making it clear who He is talking to., and what he is talking about.**
  - (6)II Kings 23:4-20 speaks interesting enough that during Josiah’s reign there was a great attempt to make this happen. Dealing with the idolatry.**
  - (7)From here on in he will be telling each group of people why they are in for His wrath.**
  - (8)See Amos 2:4-5- Amos prophesied this at least 200 years before.**
- c. **Who is he going to punish in verses 7-9 and why?**
- 1. The royalty...and**
  - 2. God addresses them in a manner they are not used to...He commands THEIR silence in the presence of the true King. Why?**
    - i. **They are idolaters as well.**
    - ii. **They have given up their national identity...which shows the influence of Assyria and Babylon...those who are their rulers at the time. They wish to look like the nations around them so they can feel important and wealthy and powerful...even though they will soon be vassals.**
    - iii. **Because they “leap over the threshold...”-**
      - **“invading a neighbor’s home”- another person in Judah/Jerusalem because they have what you want...from servants to spouse. As royalty taking from the regular person what is “rightfully” theirs for themselves just because they can.**
      - **OR...In Zephaniah’s day there were multiple superstitions surrounding thresholds of the house. The 2 most prominent were:**
        - 1) A bridegroom would carry the bride across the threshold because there were demons that loitered in**

**the doorframe and if she stepped on one she would carry it into the house and the marriage would be cursed.**

**2) Everyone was told to jump over their threshold so as to not allow demons or gods to catch hold of you when you passed and so gain entrance into your home.**

**3) This superstition reveals some of the depth of Judah's idolatry and their being overly influenced by other cultures.**

**iv. The royalty go to great lengths to adhere to local customs and superstitions to make their captives comfortable and to make them think they are becoming just like them but they are not interested in following God's Laws and decrees.**

**d. So who's on the chopping block now and why in verses 10-11?**

**1. The merchants- unjust pricing**

**2. The wealthy-unjust profiting**

**3. A cry will be heard from every quarter of the city which represent every section of Judah.**

**e. What about the ones in verses 12-13?**

**1. First we see that whoever God is looking for will not be lost...everyone will be found.**

**2. The Lord says, "*I will punish the complacent*"...why?**

**i. Lukewarm- like Laodicea...God will spit them out of His mouth.**

**ii. People who don't take God seriously. They deserve His wrath. "*The Lord will not do good, nor will he do ill.*"**

■ **God is not involved any longer...He may have created but He doesn't intervene...and even if He would it will be of no consequence.**

■ **All religions are equally true.**

■ **All gods are the same.**

■ **All religions can be equally useful as long as they support the greater good as defined by the government.**



## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

February 20, 2019

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. Thinking about what we saw in chapter 4, what are some principles that we can glean from this teaching almost 3000 years later?
  - a. **We must obey God or die! (This came from one of our young one...it all seemed pretty clear to him!)**
  - b. **We must understand God sees through us and judges the intentions of our hearts**
  - c. **We must remember that God doesn't do anything that He doesn't tell us about beforehand. Our problem is we don't believe Him enough.**
  - d. **We must listen to the Word of the LORD.**
  - e. **We must only worship as He prescribes.**
  - f. **We must walk in His ways not our own.**
  - g. **We must take care of the poor in our midst.**
  - h. **We must not seek to show partiality or superiority over another.**
  - i. **We must repent and live...or don't repent and die eternally.- It is never a good thing when God says, "...prepare to meet your Maker...your God/Elohim, O Israel!" !"** Going to meet Him either way but one means life... the other wailing and gnashing of teeth.
  - j. **We must humble ourselves before our God and King and Father.**
2. What might God's discipline/warning signs look like today that show the world/our nation that it is going too far away from His established precepts?
3. Our nation is NOT the covenant nation (God's chosen people) but, the Church is; sooo... What might God's discipline/warning signs look like today that show the Church is going too far away from His established precepts and desires for her?

### C. Amos chapter 5:1-15

1. What specifically do we see again in the first part of the first verse yet again and why?
  - a. **"Hear this Word..." might as well be saying "Hear my Words of certain judgment that I bring against you again...still!"**
  - b. **When God speaks all people that on earth do dwell must listen! It is all created orders duty! It is also in our interest.**
  - c. **4 times in these last 2 chapters do we see God calling to Israel with His judgments against them to HEAR!...**
    - (1)3:1, 13
    - (2)4:1
    - (3)5:1
    - **Because as men they cannot or will not hear what God is saying to them.**
    - **But they are called, now, to give their full attention to them...like a prisoner standing before His accusers he is compelled to look and listen to the charges.**

- **In this case they are commanded by their KING and Judge and they must heed what He has to say...This is the Word of the LORD.**
2. What is meant by these words in verse 1, *"...that I take up over you in lamentations, O house of Israel:..."*?
    - a. **God would that no one would perish but because of His covenant conditions which cannot be broken...**
    - b. **After all these are His chosen children even if all of them aren't ..He had blessed them and loved them and even His remnant must now experience His wrath some more fully than others obviously.**
  3. How "fallen" are they according to verses 2-3?
    - a. **Vs. 2-**
      - (1) **"The virgin Israel" -Is a not so subtle sarcasm/rebuke of Israel...for they are anything but a "virgin".**
      - (2) **"Forsaken on her land with none to raise her up."- she has been left by her lover and she can't get up. God has left her to her own devices and she is so drunk that she literally cannot get up out of her own way.**
      - (3) **The one who had been courted...the one who had been once a treasure to God...the one who had great strength and promise, in the LORD...has been left and discarded by the only one in her life that could make her beautiful again.**
      - (4) **She shall never return to her former dignity with God.**
    - b. **Vs. 3-**
      - (1) **1 person in 10 shall be left after God's judgment falls.**
      - (2) **God will reduce Israel by 90% only 10% remain to one day worship the LORD.**
      - (3) **Someone commented, and it is an interesting observation, that this is 10%...the tithe...and the observation came with a "wondering" of whether this was yet a subtle message from God that since they hadn't worshiped Him correctly given a true tithe that perhaps He has taking one...or in this case taking 90% and keeping the remaining 10% for Himself.**
  4. What does God promise His people in verses 4-7?
    - a. **Life if they would but seek Him.**
      - (1) **Seek NOT their idols.**
      - (2) **Seek NOT their own way.**
      - (3) **Seek NOT the way of the nations around them.**
    - b. **Judgment with the non-believers and false priest and prophets if they don't turn and repent.**
      - (1) **Bethel, Gilgal, Beersheba will all come to ruin...Gilgal will for sure be taken into exile...Bethel will be basically destroyed...and Beersheba doesn't even warrant being named in the judgment it will so complete.**
      - (2) **If they don't repent and seek him all Israel will be devoured all the way to and including Bethel...total and complete destruction of those who were once favored among the nations.**

- c. Now what is the problem? Why is this so hard for most of them?
- (1) Tears of putting away...not even considering God's Word as pertinent or commanded.**
  - (2) Years of perverted justice ...and perverted life style...lie become truth...truth becomes a lie...no absolute standards.**
  - (3) Years of idol worship...we have always done it that way.**
  - (4) Years of doing what is right in their own eyes.**
  - (5) Years of not seeking the LORD even in their rituals. They often went through the motions of worship but not to bring God glory but because they were Jews...or because it was what they always had done along with their other idol worship...the more gods the better.**
- d. 2 times God places a simple formula before the people that He had invested much into... *"Seek me and live...Seek Yahweh and live..."* What are some things that this communicates to you?
- (1) It is just that simple...maybe too simple for their "sophisticated and fashionable" lives...**
  - (2) God will is not so difficult in the final analysis...but it is impossible for all who are not His...all who have not been effectually called by God...His elect.**
  - (3) It is a pretty simple instruction but it goes against their default...their intuition...their conventional wisdom...their fallen nature. (See Deut. 30:1-20 [especially vs. 11-20]; II Chr. 15:1-6)**
- e. How does God define His people in verse 7? Why?
- (1) *"O You who turn justice to wormwood..."* Justice should be a blessing and it should be sweet because it is true....but these people have turn justice upside down for personal gain...for class superiority.**
  - (2) *"... and cast down righteousness to the earth."* They deplore the righteous acts of the righteous prophets and priests...because they deplore the Word of God...they are purposefully following unrighteousness because they know what righteousness looks like. Making falsehoods into truth and truth into falsehood to fit their paradigm...The "lie when the truth fits" just to keep from telling the truth...another way that they have fallen. See Rom. 1:19-23, 32.**

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

February 26, 2020

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. Chapter 3:1-7- What were God's points as he begins to bring this prophecy to and end?

**a. God is pointing out once again why it is necessary to bring His wrath down upon them.**

**(1) She has not obeyed His Word.**

**(2) She has not accepted or received correction correctly.**

**(3) She has not trusted in the Lord.**

**(4) She has not drawn near to her God...she has not loved the Lord with her all so she was unable to do any of the other things.**

**(5) Her leaders, officials, prophets and priests were corrupted by the fact that they profaned God's Word.**

**b. God makes it clear that he is righteous and just in contrast to them...His children.**

2. What is the purpose (s) for verse 8?

**a. In summarizing all that He is going to do He is reminding them that they will have to wait for Him to deliver them...not from the tribulation but ultimately back to Himself.**

**b. He is preparing them for what He has instore for them...wait and see the mercy and grace of the LORD.**

### C. Let's finish the prophecy. We began looking at vss. 9-13 last week.

1. What are some of the very specific ways God will bless and restore His people? When?

**a. A new language He will give to His redeemed/remnant.**

**(1) This happened the first time with the revival under Nehemiah. Look at Nehemiah 8:1-8...They had been without for a long time and had forgotten the Law...the Word of God...the speech they were supposed to use.**

- **Ezra opened the Scriptures to them.**

- **Ezra and others helped the people to understand the Word.**

- **They made it clear and gave people insight into the Word so that the people would understand God's Word.**

**(2) When we are renewed by God's grace through Jesus Christ we receive a new language ...one that enables us to call upon God readily...one that enables us to praise God ...one that enables us to seek repentance for our on-going sins.**

**(3) This happens in these LAST Days as God works on His elect so that we speak and act and think differently than the peoples around us...teaching our children the language of God when we teach them the Bible and the catechism.**

**(4) This will happen ON the LAST DAY with the new heavens and new earth.**

- b. **New actions because of the language given...**
    - (1) ***"...serve Him with one accord..."*** See Phil. 2:2- the Hebrew gets to the heart of this meaning serve Him "with one shoulder"- he is calling on us to put our collective backs into serving God shoulder to shoulder...side by side.
    - (2) **This also means we cannot serve Him effectively alone...but together as a unified people...bearing the load of one another. See Gal. 6:2**
  - c. **A new people...or a completed/fulfilled people...**
    - (1) **He is not just talking about the Jews here but all those from every nation, tongue and tribe...**
    - (2) **There will be no more shame...no one can hold over our heads our past sins...neither Satan, ourselves or others...for all will have been changed in an instant in a moment.**
    - (3) **For God will remove not only the outright pagans, but also the proudly exultant ones within our midst- Matt. 7:21-23**
    - (4) **No one will be haughty ever again...the Hebrew and Greek word speaks of being blatantly and disdainfully proud. Ps. 101:5; Prov. 6:7, 21:4; Is. 3:16.**
    - (5) **But with change of heart we go from haughty to humble.**
    - (6) **He seems to have been jumping back and forth in time a bit...from the Exile to Return from the Exile and then the Last Day.**
      - **But here in 12 and 13 he seems to be talking about those who aren't taken into exile.**
      - **As often seems to be the case...the more God's people suffer the more they call on His name as they have nothing else in which to trust.**
      - **In the midst of the affliction they may yet be better off than the ones who were carted off to Babylon.**
  - d. **One plan, One people, One promise...all united under God's covenant of redemption.**
3. What do we see in verses 14-20? How has her (the Churches) speech changed in these verses?
- a. **She is recognizing once again how dependable and how much joy there is in the LORD.**
  - b. **Once again they are praising God for what He has done and as we come to the end of these verses...what He will do.**
  - c. **God's history is ultimately important to His people...it brings us comfort...hope...assurance...and confidence in Christ to even deal with the hardships that come our way. Vs. 16- *"Fear not, O ZION; let not your hands grow weak. The LORD is in your midst; a mighty One to save..."***
    - (1) ***"The mighty One to save..."*** Who does Isaiah say the Mighty One or Mighty God is? **The Messiah Jesus Christ.**

**(2) Consider John 12:12-19- “The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, and “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!” His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about Him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. 18 The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.”**

- **When it says after His glorification, “then they remembered that these things had been written about Him...” the text is referring to the OT prophecies like the one referred to from Zech. 9:9...also maybe Isaiah 53.**
- **We see only Jesus can fulfill this promise and He does securing salvation for all who are His.**

**d. This is a reminder that all the judgment will pass on to a brighter tomorrow.**

**e. The fact that the LORD is rejoicing over us will lead us to rejoice over Him and His work.**

**(1) The text says around verse 17, “...He will rejoice over you with gladness or joy...”**

**(2) The end of verse 17 says, “...He will exult/rejoice over you with loud singing.”**

**(3) Spurgeon reminds us- “As faulty as the Church is, the LORD rejoices in her. While we mourn, as we may, yet we do not sorrow as those without hope; for God does not sorrow, His heart is glad, and He is said to rejoice with joy...a highly emphatic expression.”**

**f. “...He will quiet you by His love...”; “I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival...” And this is the God of the OT...!!!**

**g. Starting with verse 19 we read the phrase “at that time...at the time” going along with the other similar phrases like “on that day...” or “...the great day of the LORD...” or “...the day of the wrath of the Lord.” Again what day or days is does he have in mind with this prophecy?**

**(1) The Reformation under Josiah.**

**(2) The Return from Exile that we saw in Nehemiah and Ezra.**

**(3) The coming, death and resurrection of the LORD.**

**(4) Pentecost**

**(5) Constantine’s “converting” the Roman world.**

**(6) 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Great Awakenings in this country.**

**(7) The Great Revivals of Ireland, Scotland and even England.**

**(8) The knowledge of all believers at conversion.**

**(9) Historical events like the Protestant Reformation maybe.**

**(10) Certainly His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.**

**4. Now that we have considered the whole book...what are a couple of “take a ways” that will strengthen your faith and your resolve to live out that faith before others?**

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

April 15, 2020

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. It has been a couple of weeks since we looked at Zephaniah. What were a couple of “take a ways” that will strengthen your faith and your resolve to live out that faith before others?
2. When we consider the Minor Prophets that we have looked at, what would you say has been the biggest benefit (s) to your growth in faith so far

### C. Habakkuk

#### 1. Introduction.

##### a. When was this prophesy written?

- (1) Habakkuk seems to be a 7<sup>th</sup> Century prophet (609-598 BC)**
- (2) He was a contemporary with Jeremiah as well.**
- (3) We are getting closer to when all of these prophecies would be coming to fruition...about 10 to 12 years before the fall of Jerusalem.**
- (4) Written 2500 years ago and seemingly, if we are paying attention, still extremely contemporary...as he deals with questions that are still relevant today.**
- (5) He seems to be writing AFTER the fall of Nineveh (612 BC) since the Assyrians aren't the local threat any longer.**
- (6) Josiah has died at the hand of the Pharaoh Neco of Egypt, Jehoahaz ruled briefly (3 months or so) then was deposed by Pharaoh and Neco placed Jehoahaz' brother Eliakim/Jehoiakim on the throne to rule for him as his vassal. Jehoiakim would rule for 11 years and was a very evil king in the sight of the LORD. (609-598BC) When Nebuchadnezzar begins to make his play on Judah.**
- (7) Hence the 5 oracles pertaining to the Babylonians/Chaldeans.**

##### b. Who is he? What does the Bible and Bible history tell us about Habakkuk?

- (1) Yet another one we don't know much about since he is mentioned nowhere else in the Old Testament.**
- (2) Habakkuk, the prophet! –Verse 1.**
- (3) He means seems to mean- “Embrace”- or “He who embraces/clings”...and Habakkuk is seen in the end clinging to his faith.**
- (4) He grew up in the reign of Josiah so he would have seen all the reforms that had been put into place...reforms that were from the top down...but the people had not really reformed...since after Josiah's death things turned around very quickly. Jeremiah and Ezekiel describe this age in detail up until the fall of Jerusalem in 587BC.**
- (5) Given the song at the end of this prophecy many Jewish Scholars speculate that he was a Levite during the reformation and then called by God to the office of Prophet to supplement the teachings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.**

**(6) But given all that the prophet had seen and lived through and is now living through...he brings the questions of the remnant that God knows they are asking so they can have answers, Like, where is God?...is He in charge of history? ..and if He is, why do things happen the way they do?**

c. What is his "problem"?

**(1) Interesting...we have a prophet of God...anxious to reconcile what he sees with what he believed. Sounds like a problem we often have as believers.**

- **The psalmist also struggles with this.**
- **The disciples...not just Thomas doubted.**
- **Paul speaks to this anxiety...his and the churches...in his letters.**

**(2) He saw corruption in God's people and was anxious as to why God was allowing it.**

**(3) Then quickly he becomes anxious over how God will deal with His own people...the Babylonians/Chaldeans...the worst of the worst...or was it a problem with history and not remembering how bad the Assyrians were...a generation or so removed.**

**(4) He is anxious because he can't figure out ...just yet...how this action squares with God's holiness.**

2. Opening line vs. 1- *"The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw."* Now let's break this down a bit.

a. What is an oracle?

**(1) "A weighty vision"... "A burden..." ...a judgment!**

**(2) Why?**

- **He knew the depths of God's wrath and there wasn't anything he could do or say that would help those who were going to perish.**
- **He also knew that people would be asking the questions that He puts forth...questions that he had...but interestingly...Questions that God knew would be being asked so He has Habakkuk ask them as if they came from himself.**
- **But even the restoration part of the vision was a burden**
  - **Because He knew that God's people would have to endure this great tribulation as well.**
  - **But also, because he knew that God has chosen against His own people...those he would save and those He would not.**

b. *"the oracle he saw."*

**(1) Because Habakkuk like so many others carried around with him the reality of God's coming judgment in full HD, if you will.**

**(2) He couldn't unseen the death, destruction and the exile of God's people by the Babylonians that was coming.**

- **The word "Saw" takes on a whole deeper level than we can even imagine.**
- **He saw what God was going to do...all that God was going to do through the Babylonians.**
- **He saw...in that he completely knew that God is righteous...that God is at once just and the justifier.**



- He saw the absolute truth....because God had given him such a vision as this oracle.
- He saw and knew there was nothing He could do beyond share this oracle publically.

**(3) He saw all of these things but he still struggled within himself .**

5. What is the prophet's dilemma in verses 2-4?

**a. He sees violence all around but sees and hears no answer from God.**

**(1) His general cries for The People, even his specific ones of "Violence" are being met with silence from God.**

**(2) Even his desire to know why he needs to see this is met with no answers from God.**

**(3) God has told us before though:**

- He allows us to see iniquity in ourselves to keep us humble...to make us submissive in the hour of trouble and to cause us to value our salvation all the more.
- He allows us to see iniquity in others so that we see what we could have been, so we can see and be reminded of the destructiveness of sin so we will hate it even more, to make us cling to the grace of God all the more and to focus us on the will of God so we can be fruitful to His glory.

**b. Why does God permit this evil among His people to go on...the *"wicked to surround the righteous, so justice goes on perverted."***

**(1) Their sin needed to be made full...complete...so they rush on in their sin to their own destruction...**

**(2) God has hardened their hearts.**

**(3) The word "wicked" is singular which seems to speak to the fact that the wicked were all united in their wickedness against all the righteous.**

**(4) Justice system bends the way of the wicked not the righteous...because justice is partial at this time.**

**c. He has lived through the "good times" in Judah...now the bad times are upon them.**

**(1) Even though there were many reforms made by Josiah it seems the people did not reform...**

**(2) They followed the king's lead but their hearts were in their sinfulness. So after Josiah's death and the banishment to Egypt of Jehoahaz life went pretty much back to "normal".**

**d. So Habakkuk sees trouble everywhere from our internal strife, to struggle with personal relationships to the court system and wonders why God isn't setting things right?**

**e. These are questions that come up even from the most devoted among us who believe but can't believe their eyes as to how bad things around them are getting even though God and his word tell us that they will.**

6. So how does God answer the prophet's questions/dilemma in verses 5-11?

**a. By giving him this oracle...need to beware of what we ask for!**

**b. The answer to His questions is not what he expected.**

**(1) He tells him to "wait"...to "look"...the last thing the prophet wants to do. Remember James 1:19. *"Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger..."***

- (2) To see and wonder and be utterly astounded by what God is doing...going to do... and has done in the past. Remembering how God has worked in the past enables us to get a glimpse of understanding of how He is now working and will work.**
- (3) The “you” here is a collective “you” ...all God’s people.**
- (4) Here comes the Babylonians/Chaldeans.**

**c. What does God tell him and the people about the Babylonians/Chaldeans? And why?**

- (1) Because of Judah’s great sins...their moral and spiritual deterioration.**
  - **They had presumed on God’s patience for too long.**
  - **They didn’t take a lesson from the Northern Kingdoms demise...they rejected all the prophets from Amos on who told them of the judgement that was coming.**
  - **God will send the Babylonians/ Chaldeans as my answer to how long and what kind of help that is coming from Him to deal with the sins of His people.**
    - **They were raised up by the LORD of Glory.**
    - **They are the worst of the worst that God had prepared for His judgment against His people.**
    - **They wanted to come because they were a conquering people but it was God who spurred them on to do this when they did in His time frame for judgment.**
    - **If God had not ordained and raised them up they would not or could not have done so.**
- (2) God tells Habakkuk that they are coming fast to do God’s own bidding against His people....And His judgement is dreaded and fearful or terrible and dreadful.**
- (3) Nothing will stop them since it is God who is sending them for this purpose.**
- (4) God enables and raises them up to do what they were created to do...what was in their nature to do...because they are convinced that they are sent from the gods on their quest...not their gods...But the One true God.**
- (5) But they are “guilty men” because they are by nature sinners even in the hands of an angry God. They are guilty which means they have chosen to do this even as God has raised them up to do this...and so their judgment is set and it is just, as well...for when their usefulness is up they too will be dealt a heavy blow by God.**

**7. What’s the prophet’s inquiry here in verses 12-17?**

- a. Why God are you doing it this way? Why would you use a nation more wicked than Judah to bring judgment?**
- b. He appears to be beseeching Him because of His character and His attributes why would you, a Holy God, do it this way?**
  - (1) He knows that God being God He can’t even look upon evil and pass by without doing something.**

- (2) He reminds us of this fact...even if He deals with it in a way that we wouldn't have liked...why did He in His providence allow for slavery to occur...abortions to happen...euthanasia...the Holocaust. The problem of evil...to our puny minds we often think that evil is in charge...because God certainly wouldn't use evil for His own purposes...and of course He would ...has ...does...and will again.
    - (3) He uses whatever He deems to bring about His redemptive history as He has planned it by His providence.
  - c. But he does cause us to consider God's character and His attributes this way.
  - d. Habakkuk wonders how long God will allow the Babylonians to continue their conquest of the nations... it is as if all other peoples are conquered as easily as catching fish in a net...a trolling net. And the Babylonians rejoice in their spoils.
  - e. So Habakkuk asks yet again will this ever end? He knows the answer but is so overwhelmed with the burden of the reality of all that God is doing.
8. How is Habakkuk indicative of the way we struggle with God's providence?
- a. Habakkuk was first troubled that God wasn't doing anything to bring about judgment on Judah a wicked people ...now Habakkuk is troubled by the agent/instrument God is going to use...which reminds us that God is in fact Sovereign overall and that all of creation is at His disposal and we should not be "surprised by the way God works.
  - b. So the first thing he is anxious or perplexed about is what we wonder about as well...God often times seems strangely silent and inactive in bad or evil circumstances. But God was anything but inactive or silent considering what had been said by the other prophets.
  - c. So one of the things the prophet learns here is something we ought to be reminded of ourselves...that God sometimes gives unexpected answers to our prayers and we must accept these.
  - d. Another thing he learns...that we must not forget is that God sometimes uses strange instruments to correct His Church and His people....maybe even the last thing we would think of. Can you say... the antagonism that has been riding against the year for decades pushing us to either compromise or to stand firm.
  - e. Now think about this before we get too hard on Habakkuk:
    - (1) Many in the Church are crying out to God today concerning the state of the Church in America. What if God responded by saying, "I am going to fix the problem." Then we say "Great...how long is it going to take?"
    - (2) And God says, Look, I am raising up Communist China to invade America...or I am going to give you a Socialist government." We might then be tempted want to say as the prophet, "Wait, the problem is bad, but your cure is worse than the disease."
    - (3) Sort of like chemotherapy for the cancer patient...though we don't balk about that as much.

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

April 22, 2020

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

#### 1. Who is Habakkuk?

- a. **The prophet of God.**
- b. **The one God uses to give voice to the faithful and their struggles with what God is not doing and what He will be doing.**
- c. **How do we know this is true? Because the Bible says so...that really is all the proof we need as Christians.**

#### 2. After seeing all that he saw, what is his dilemma and how does God answer him?

- a. **His first complaint was *How long Oh LORD* will you hesitate in dealing with your people for their sin is getting worse and worse with each new day. God says...wait...look ...I am taking care of it in my own time and in my own way...their sin is not yet full and the Babylonians are not yet ready to carry out my will....but they are coming to take care of these wicked people.**
- b. **His second complaint presumes upon God's holiness and wonders how He can use such a wicked people to deal justly with the wicked Jews? And he goes to his room the watchtower to await God's answer.**

### C. Habakkuk 2

#### 1. What does the prophet appear to be doing in vs 1?

- a. **He makes his complaint and then heads off to another place.**
- b. **A side issue concerning translation at the end of verse 1- we have, *"...and look to see what He will say to me and what I will answer concerning my complaint"*... as if he is poised for a comeback depending upon what God answers... But the Hebrew could also be read, *"...what shall I answer when I am reproved by those who will not like what I have said..."* or *"...when I am reproved by God for what I have said."* Or *"...what will He answer me concerning my complaint."***
- c. **Running away from where he was?**
- d. **Or...is he going to a place of solace and focus to wait on the LORD.**
  - (1) **The watchtower is where you were able to see a great distance concerning the coming of an enemy or the coming of the King back from battle. The watchmen would wait for hours and they must stay alert to what may be coming...the whole community counted on their alertness...it was also a place where you wouldn't be distracted a place where the prophet could go to pray undisturbed...**
  - (2) **The watchtower was also built in a field or a vineyard so one could keep watch over the crop to tell when the harvest was ready.**
  - (3) **So he will wait for the Lord's answer here...**
    - **He has gone as far as his reasoning and understanding can take him. He cannot figure this one out without God's help.**

- **He already knows that the LORD will use the Babylonians to carry out His judgement...but he is probably hoping to get the answer he wants...expecting God to change His mind.**
  - **But he still waits on the LORD...teaching us to wait on the LORD. He has seen it all but he doesn't want to believe it...he is so much like us.**
- e. Think about this a minute. We always are wondering ourselves, How does one leave their problem with the Lord? Well, how does Habakkuk shed light on how we are to do this?
- (1) We should detach ourselves from the problem...that is don't talk about it with others for the time being and don't brood over it...go and set your mind on something else after you cry out to God with your problem.**
- (2) Then we should expect God's answer. If we take the last one of the Hebrew translations "...and look to see what He will say to me and what will He answer me concerning my complaint."- He is anticipating God to answer him and why wouldn't he...God has been answering him even if it wasn't what he wanted to hear. He doesn't forget about it once he has "given it" to the Lord...but instead of rehashing it he is waiting expectantly for the Lord to answer. So Habakkuk stands at his watch and looks out to see the answer of the Lord just like he would if he was looking for something else expected.**
- (3) By saying basically the same thing twice, Hebrew poetical form tells us that he is going to be tenacious in his expectation...and this communicates that he will stay there until God answers him...the picture is standing in the presence of the one from which you want an answer until you get it.**
2. So, while he is in his tower away from everyone God tells him to do something and then He gives him two answers to his complaint in verses 2-5. What does he tell him to do and why? Then what are the specific answers and what do they mean?
- a. **Before he gives Habakkuk His answer God commands him to, "Write the Vision... or Write this down for posterity."**
- (1) To make it plain so no one is left scratching their head as to its meaning.**
- **They can see how God worked in the past...how He kept His promises...How His providence was at work.**
  - **So everyone can see that God's timing is always right. Which means:**
    - **In affliction we are sanctified.**
    - **In affliction we who are His will be brought to repentance.**
    - **In affliction we can see and appreciate God's deliverance.**
    - **But through affliction we still must wait for God's timing.**
- (2) Make it clear so that all who read it can actually live by it.- The perspicuity of Scripture....the clarity of Scripture and ease of application because the Spirit is always at work in His people.**

**(3) He did that and we are called to live by what He wrote. *“For all Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”* (II Tim. 3:16-17)**

**(4) We are to always look at and understand history only in terms of God's kingdom for all history is being directed by God based in the plan we call the Covenant of Redemption.**

**b. The first answer the he wants to make clear deals with the remnant...end of verse 4- *“...but the righteous shall live by faith.”* And the last sentence of verse 5- *“He gathers for Himself all nations and collects as His own all peoples.”* (See also Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38.)**

**(1) These are they who live by His faith...they will be saved even though they will have to endure the hardship of Exile. Everything in its appointed time.**

- **These are those that had been chosen before the foundation of the world unto adoption by faith in Christ Jesus.**
- **These have been made righteous by the giving of Christ's righteousness as they believed in faith looking forward to the Messiah's coming.**

**(2) They will be purified in the appointed time but he must wait for it...as it had been prophesied before.**

**(3) He will gather for himself from all nations His own.**

**c. The second answer that He wants to make clear is that the wicked- *“...his soul...”* - the unfaithful...the non-elect... will be punished.**

**(1) God's evil and sinful people. But by waiting to judge His own people He is not endorsing their sinfulness in any way...God's is long suffering toward His wayward people.**

**(2) The Babylonians. The Babylonians will get their just justice in due time once God has used them for His purposes. In due course...in due time...as has already been prophesied I will judge them for what they have done and are doing.**

**3. Vs. 6-20 shows us what the end of the Babylonians will look like. The taunt songs of God's true people...those he will gather from every nation, tongue and peoples. Each “woe” begins a new stanza...that describes the misery of the person or nation that believes it can do without God. What do these taunts specifically tell us and teach us today?**

**a. These are witnesses to what these evil people are doing and they will cry out righteously against them with what God will do to the wicked.**

**b. Vs. 6-8- deals with greed and how their greed will undue them and make them vulnerable to be plundered by those they have oppressed.**

**(1) Knowing the weakness of peoples these people seek to profit from it...**

- **People, in our culture, are more indebt than at any other time in history...so stretched that they are often one check away from having it all taken from them.**
- **When one does not trust God for His provision and care than that person will seek to find pleasure and security on their own.**

**(2) These people go so far as to make people debtors to them and they will pay the price for their actions. There will be pay back for their sin of greed that defines them.**

**c. Vs. 9-11 –this taunt deals with injustice.**

**(1) This person or nation has done whatever it takes to get wealthy or powerful but there will be a day of reckoning where those around him will say enough is enough and they will strike back...**

**(2) Vs. 10 speaks specifically of God's wrath against them.**

**(3) Vs. 11- seems to have a double meaning-**

- **He has done so many bad things that each stone and each peiece of wood that they have gotten by unjust gain will ultimate scream out as witnesses against them. Certainly might be true at the Great White Throne judgment...there is, after all, a requirement for at least 2 witnesses to bring a cases against the wicked and here are at least 2.**
- **But the words could also look to the man who finds himself later in life wishing to make amends and can't s for some reason so he has to live with his conscience which keeps reminding him as if these stone and woodwork could talk of what he has done to others. Living with that shame can take a toll on a person.**

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

April 29, 2020

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. We always are wondering ourselves, How does one leave their problem with the Lord? Well, how does Habakkuk specifically shed light on how we are to do this? In other words, what does he do?
  - a. **We should detach ourselves from the problem...that is don't talk about it with others for the time being and don't brood over it...go and set your mind on something else after you cry out to God with your problem.**
  - b. **Then we should expect God's answer. If we take the last one of the Hebrew translations *"...and look to see what He will say to me and what will He answer me concerning my complaint."* He is anticipating God to answer him and why wouldn't he...God has been answering him even if it wasn't what he wanted to hear. He doesn't forget about it once he has "given it" to the Lord...but instead of rehashing it he is waiting expectantly for the Lord to answer. So Habakkuk stands at his watch and looks out to see the answer of the Lord just like he would if he was looking for something else expected.**
  - c. **By saying basically the same thing twice, Hebrew poetical form tells us that he is going to be tenacious in his expectation...and this communicates that he will stay there until God answers him...the picture is standing in the presence of the one from which you want an answer until you get it.**
2. Last week we ended looking at the first 2 "woes" from vs. 6-11 which begins to show us what the end of evil Judah and the Babylonians will look like. These are the taunt songs of God's true people...(those He will gather from every nation, tongue and peoples.) Each "woe" begins a new stanza...that describes the misery of the person or nation that believes it can do without God. What do these taunts specifically say what do they teach us today?
  - a. **These... The Babylonians/Chaldeans and the evil Jews stand in contrast to the righteous who live by His faith.**
  - b. **These are witnesses to what these evil people are doing and they will cry out righteously against them with what God will do to the wicked.**
  - c. **Vs. 6-8- deals with greed and how their greed will undue them and make them vulnerable to be plundered by those they have oppressed.**
    - (1) **Knowing the weakness of peoples these people seek to profit from it...**
      - **People, in our culture, are more indebt than at any other time in history...so stretched that they are often one check away from having it all taken from them.**
      - **When one does not trust God for His provision and care than that person will seek to find pleasure and security on their own.**
    - (2) **These people go so far as to make people debtors to them and they will pay the price for their actions. There will be pay back for their sin of greed that defines them.**



d. **Vs. 9-11 –this taunt deals with injustice.**

**(1) This person or nation has done whatever it takes to get wealthy or powerful...**

- **He does whatever it takes to preserve what he has stolen as well “...sets his nest on high to be safe from the reach of harm.”**
  - **How many worry so much about their wealth that they are obsessed with keeping it safe...**
  - **Since they stole it themselves they are afraid all of their days someone will steal it back.**
  - **Back in the day men used to sit in one of the local investment firms just watching their money on the stock market digital ticker tape machine because they were fearful of their stocks. I am sure people do that today on their apps on their phone.**
- **Between Solomon and Jesus... both speak of how this man will lose his own soul to his greed. See Eccl. 5:8-20; Luke 12: 15-21- *“And He said to them, ‘Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’ And He told them a parable, saying, ‘The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.’”***
- **There will be a day of reckoning where those around him will say enough is enough and they will strike back...**

**(2) Vs. 10 speaks specifically of God’s wrath against them.**

**(3) Vs. 11- seems to have a double meaning as we saw last week...**

- **He has done so many bad things that each stone and each piece of wood that they have gotten by unjust gain will ultimately scream out as witnesses against them. Certainly might be true at the Great White Throne judgment...there is, after all, a requirement for at least 2 witnesses to bring a case against the wicked and here are at least 2.**
- **But the words could also look to the man who finds himself later in life wishing to make amends and can’t for some reason so he has to live with his conscience which keeps reminding him as if these stone and woodwork could talk of what he has done to others. Living with that shame can take a toll on a person.**

3. Let’s continue looking at the taunts/ woes from the remnant.

a. **Vs. 12-14- deals with violence.**

**(1) Folks have gone from greed to injustice and now to violence to make sure they get and keep what they have.**

**(2) The violent man thinks that his might makes things right in his own eyes, so he sees himself as free to abuse those of lesser stature and status.**

**(3) Do we see the progression in sin...there is nothing to stop this forward motion.**

- **Without the Lord we can't get enough to satisfy us.**
- **Remember the curse in Gen. 3...no satisfaction in this life except the satisfaction the Lord provides in His salvation given to His own.**
- **God has ordained that all who work to succeed outside of God's will ...**
  - **Will see it all go to someone else who didn't earn it and they will squander it...See Ecclesiastes 2:18-23**
  - **It will all burn up in this life...they will lose everything...**
  - **They will weary themselves for nothing...because no matter how wealthy or powerful...without the LORD there is only death...no reward.**

**(4) There must be an understanding and acceptance of verse 14- *"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the seas."***

- **This may be anticipating a Day where all sin will be gone and the greatest treasure then as is now is the knowledge ...the salvation of the LORD.**
- **But...as we have seen throughout the Minor Prophets...no matter how much saturation there is of God's Word people still do what they want...even those who claim to be believers.**
- **For the Word has gone out ...and is even now going out to every area of the world via the internet and people are still the same.**
- **For the non-elect are naturally blind and deaf to the truth...**
- **The elect often get too prosperous for our own good and become complacent and then wonder why in crisis we become anxious.**
  - **Even we fear that we will lose what "we" have acquired.**
  - **Need more repentance of our complacency and our lack of trust.**

**b. Vs. 15-17-deals with immoralities. It is not enough to be greedy, unjust and violent the next characteristic of these people is seen in their immorality.**

**(1) Some people make this all about drinking alcohol and how obviously bad it is for everyone...but it is about so much more...focusing more on the abuses that can be associated with abusing alcohol by evil men for their own gain...physically and emotionally.**

- (2) This could also speak to what Paul does in Romans 1:28-32- *“And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”*
- (3) However in context we see he non-believer searches for security in all of the sins we have listed and while he searches and achieves... he realizes that these too aren't satisfying so he must up his “game.”
- (4) So he turns to immorality for pleasure and “love”...but of course there is nothing biblical in what he really wants and desires... hence all the immorality of our day.
- In our day there are the private immoralities that cause people to stumble.
  - But also the trafficking of people for immoral purposes.
- (5) Vs. 16-17 clearly spells out how God will bring judgment upon them:
- They will be seduced by their own seduction...power, pleasure, position and it will be their undoing...even revealing they are not of the circumcised...not of the faith, no matter their claim...not really Abraham's people either.
  - The cup of God's wrath... Ps. 75:8...His right hand signifies His power and their inability to resist drinking the cup of divine wrath. And they will drink to the point of vomiting all of it up on themselves in public...public shame as people see who they really are...or in the case of Babylon they will literally choke on the revelry as the Persian come in and kill them where they sit in the midst of a multiple day banquet.
  - And since the Church of God ...Lebanon where the lumber for the temple came from...is persecuted through the ages by all peoples those who persecute will be overwhelmed and overthrown because of their iniquity...they will be hunted down and made extinct as was done to the worst of beasts to ensure safety of the people.
  - He repeats the phrase, *“...for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them.”* (See also vs 8)...to emphasize that all people through the ages that engage in such activities will end up the same way. Which goes back a the Genesis 12:3 promise- *“I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*

- c. **Vs. 18-19- deals, obviously, with idolatry. The “woe” is found in vs 19 but the explanation of this one begins in vs. 18.**
- (1) So after everything else fails...or while they are doing the other sins they set up idols....in fact, the sins become their idols. Whether we are talking about the unbelieving Jews or the Babylonians everyone is an idol factory who does not depend upon God.**
- (2) So why is it that the wise and intelligent of the world fall into these?**
- **It is a way to push off blame for behaviors and lifestyles or even behaviors...the gods didn't allow it...or the gods needed it. Justification for all they do... “I do it for the gods.”**
  - **It is simply the end condition of a soul who will not and cannot walk with God.**
- (3) In our day and age Astrology is still something that people are drawn to. Why do you suppose so many drawn to this?**
- **It offers religion/spirituality without moral responsibility. It is fate and fatalism all balled up in one which absolves men from duty of any kind.**
  - **It offers revelation without the strings attached to follow God's Word. There is no judgment in cause. It speaks of a word towards the future but it does not speak of consequence or judgment.**
  - **It offers salvation without a Savior. Fate is dependent on the alignment of the stars and if your stars are aligned...you are good to go.**
- (4) This speaks also of manmade religions and cults- man-made spirituality...**
- **People want to be known as spiritual today but not tied to a particular belief system especially in the West.**
  - **Our gods whatever we conceive them to be...even our inner self are still to be at our beckon and call. They are to respond to us since WE MADE them. Whenever they call to them or they sacrifice to them they expect that their gods will do for them whatever they want.**
- (5) Now we have made a big deal about the idols that unbelievers have, what are some idols we find in the church? This section begins with the question “*What profit is an idol...?*” and of course, we would all say none...and think it rather ridiculous that anyone would talk to a piece of wood or stone.**
- **Most of the same...pleasure; wealth and materialism are all common idols even in the church.**
  - **Anything that dominates our life...that takes the place of God is an idol.**
  - **In the church today many say “*I chose God...I choose to worship Him. I got baptized to show publically what I had done. I have been good enough...I go to church so God will make sure I get in.*” This is idolatry in the church. There is virtually no difference between the pagan and believers who maintain our need to do something...anything...to be saved.**

- **We worship our buildings often enough forgetting that they are tools...**
  - **We worship our doctrine ...**
- d. All of these... greed, injustice, violence, immorality, and idolatry dominate our lives and the lives of most people in most cultures. But not only in real life does it play out but it plays out and is affirmed on our TV's, our computers, in the movies we watch and the books we read.
- (1) See also Isaiah 5. – Greed, debauchery/immorality, injustice...(this is true in Amos as well. Nothing new here.)**
- (2) From Isaiah commissioning in Isaiah 6:11-13 we see that God is a God of judgment as well as mercy.**
- **He never speaks an idle word; He fulfills not only His promises but also His threats.**
  - **As Isaiah faces the burden of this ministry, he cries out in anguish: *"How long, O Lord?"* (v. 11). And so God paints him a picture of Jerusalem ravished by her enemies. Cities are ruined and depopulated, houses deserted, fields despoiled, people exiled, and the land abandoned (vv. 11, 12).**
  - **Yet this judgement does not mean that God no longer has a people, or that He has ceased building His Church. Verse 13 tells us that the last word will be with God: *"But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land."***
  - **Now what is the "holy seed"? Well it is of course the elect of God, the people of God, the Church of Jesus Christ. Although the land be ravaged and the world despoiled, the Christ's Church will remain.**
- e. What is being communicated in vs. 20? *"But the LORD is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him."*
- (1) This verse is given as a contrast to vs. 18-19.**
- (2) God, Yahweh, is where He is high above all gods...in control over all things. Directing all things.**
- (3) The image from the Hebrew is that God has moved into the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.**
- **God has come down to where the priests work on behalf of the people....the area of the altar of incense, the table of show bread and the 10 golden lampstands...**
  - **Christ is our priest has come down to us and made God known.**
- (4) And all the earth...people nations, and idols will keep silent before Him...The Sovereign, Majestic, and Creator God.**
- **Those who are His will live by His faith. They will recognize His Holiness, majesty and WILL BE IN AWE...**
  - **Those who are guilty will not be able to make a defense...their trial is over and sentence has from long ago been handed down...they are not allowed to say anything because there is no defense to be made before a Holy God.**
  - **Then *"...every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."***

4. In summary what do these “woes” tell Habakkuk and what do they communicate to us about God?
  - a. **Habakkuk had thought God was blind and inactive concerning Judah’s sins but he sees now, as he didn’t want to see before, that all of these “woes” make it abundantly clear that God knew what was happening all along.**
  - b. **He not only knew of Judah and the Babylonians sins but also He had planned all along the judgment for both.**
  - c. **God was neither blind nor idle.**
5. We have talked about a lot. What has God’s word said to you tonight?

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
May 6, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Reminder

1. All of these... greed, injustice, violence, immorality, and idolatry dominate our lives and the lives of most people in most cultures. But not only in real life does it play out but it plays out and is affirmed on our TV's, our computers, in the movies we watch and the books we read.
  - a. **See also Isaiah 5. – Greed, debauchery/immorality, injustice... (this is true in Amos as well. Nothing new here.)**
  - b. **From Isaiah commissioning in Isaiah 6:11-13 we see that God is a God of judgment as well as mercy.**
    - (1) **He never speaks an idle word; He fulfills not only His promises but also His threats.**
    - (2) **As Isaiah faces the burden of this ministry, he cries out in anguish: "How long, O Lord?" (v. 11). And so God paints him a picture of Jerusalem ravished by her enemies. Cities are ruined and depopulated, houses deserted, fields despoiled, people exiled, and the land abandoned (vv. 11, 12).**
    - (3) **Yet this judgement does not mean that God no longer has a people, or that He has ceased building His Church. Verse 13 tells us that the last word will be with God: "But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land."**
    - (4) **Now what is the "holy seed"? Well it is of course the elect of God, the people of God, the Church of Jesus Christ. Although the land be ravaged and the world despoiled, the Christ's Church will remain.**
2. To sum up the "woes" what do they tell Habakkuk and what do they communicate to us about God?
  - d. **Habakkuk had thought God was blind and inactive concerning Judah's sins but he sees now, as he didn't want to see before, that all of these "woes" make it abundantly clear that God knew what was happening all along.**
  - e. **He not only knew of Judah and the Babylonians sins but also He had planned all along the judgment for both.**
  - f. **God was neither blind nor idle.**

C. Habakkuk 3

1. Verse 1 tells us a few things.
  - a. **Prophets are praying people...if we didn't already know that...which means they are dependent upon and expectant of God to answer their prayers. They are an example for all God's people for all ages.**
  - b. **Once again it is confirmed the Habakkuk is a prophet.**
  - c. **"...according to the Shigionoth."**
    - (1) **Some of you have a note in their Bibles that says that we don't know what this was.**
    - (2) **Shigionoth was actually plural for the term shiggaion (See Psalm 7) "a wandering psalm for those who are in anguish"...that must be set to a particular style of music.**

**(3) And so the Rabbis of old knew that... Shigionoth is a Hebrew word that speaks to "style"...in other words *"...according to the style of the chief musicians that King David had established."***

- **The music for the song/prayer would start out slowly as the song recounts God's acts of coming to His people, creation, judgment and wrath.**
- **As more information was given the music would continue to build in intensity till verse 18...when there is total victory achieved.**
- **Or as a song of lament with no victory at the end...there would be a plurality of abrupt tune changes to communicate despair.**
- **This was a common style of such a hymn that had come from a prayer that was supposed to be sung by God's people...and in fact, it was sung while they were being carried off to captivity and during the captivity by God's faithful people.**

2. Vs. 2 is the actual beginning of the prayer/ song. What does it appear that he is requesting of God in this passage?

- a. **He acknowledges that Yahweh has answered him and what he hears causes him to fear for the people and fear God all at the same time.**
- b. **With the use of the personal name of God he is speaking personally from his heart....even though these are God's word to him.**
- c. **He prays that God would over the years revive "it"...His Church ...and "it" also equals his faith...sort of like the father in the Mark 9:24-  
*"Lord, I believe, help my unbelief."***

**(1) He prays that God would make known Himself and His mercy personally to your people....think Messiah.**

**(2) *"I doubted...renew/revive my faith as well."***

**(3) He would like to see it personally again...he has seen the people following faithfully and he sees them not doing that now so his desire is that they would once again in his life time...however, that prayer was not to be.**

**(4) This is another way of saying as Jesus says in Matt. 24 said in the New Testament... *"for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short...shorten your judgement...remember your covenant."***

**(5) The prayer for revival here shows us that revival is a work of God upon men...this is not something men can do for themselves.**

- d. **Spurgeon said about this passage, *"O God, have mercy upon thy poor church, and visit her, and revive her. She has but a little strength; as she has desire to keep thy word; of refresh her; restore to her thy power, and give her yet to be great in the land."***

3. How would we describe verses 3-15?

- a. **A song/Psalm of praise to the God who brings revival in His time and in His way.**
- b. **These acts of God are all worth remembering.**
- c. **They will especially need them as they will soon be carried off to captivity.**



- d. **This song is given to them since they probably would not have taken any of the sacred scrolls with them given how they would be carted away with basically the clothes on their backs at the time of their capture.**
  - e. **Vs. 3 begins by talking about God's people just after the Exodus when He brings the people to Mt Sinai turning them into a people...**
    - (1) This is the land of Teman...Esau's grandson Teman and Mt. Paran which was part of the mountains of the Sinai Peninsula.**
      - **God "came" to His people there and gave them, His delivered people, the Law.**
      - **The Law of God reveals the love of God for His people.**
      - **God makes this point by revealing Himself in this way to His people.**
      - **Jesus and Paul makes this point throughout the NT as well.**
    - (2) This teaches us how important it is to praise God with what we know about Him from His Word.**
      - **Because it gives appropriate honor and glory to God.**
      - **Because it declares God's specific works which we need to remember.**
      - **Because it will and does teach and remind us of who God is and what He has done.**
      - **Because it places us in our proper place- dependent on Him for all things.**
      - **Because by reciting these things confidence and conviction will grow and our faith will be strengthened by His grace and mercy.**
  - f. **Vs. 4-15 recounts those works of God.**
    - (1) Vs. 13 is especially important for him and us even today**
      - **Habakkuk remembered how God had saved in the past.**
      - **It enhanced and strengthened his faith for what God would do in the future.**
      - **He also declares that salvation is brought...it is granted...it comes only through/ with His Anointed...salvation comes from/through Christ Jesus alone.**
4. What is he speaking of in verses 16-19?
- a. **He recounts all of this and he can't help but react in the fear of the LORD, in that:**
    - (1) He recognizes his own sin...He recognizes his own weakness as a prophet...his own unworthiness to stand for the LORD on his own.**
    - (2) With this recognition and the grace of God he determines that there is nowhere else for him to go...as Peter said to Jesus in John 6 after Jesus asked, *"Do you want to go away as well?" Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life and we believe, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.'*" who else has the words of life?**
    - (3) So he will wait upon the LORD to carry out His judgment upon these people as the watchman that is no longer anxious of God's plan.**

**b. Even though he sees that desolation to the land is coming... a Sabbath for the land is just around the corner, he can and will still *"...rejoice in the LORD, I will take joy in the God of my salvation."***

**(1) Sound familiar? Look at Philippians 4: 4-7 for Paul's similar recognition: *"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."***

**(2) This is to be the attitude and posture for all Christians.**

**(3) Joy in the LORD is never out of season.**

**(4) God is not diminished because we face hardship...in fact, these are His hardships that He brings so that we can stand strong for Him even in difficult times ...which He has made clear there will be...but still we are to Rejoice in the LORD...not in anything else but in the LORD.**

**c. Then he says in verse 19- *"Elohim, the sovereign One, is my strength..."***

**(1) God said to Joshua, *"Be Strong and very courageous."***

**(2) Paul says, *"Be strong in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ."* His strength to carry out what He was commanded to carry out...**

**(3) His and Joshua and ours for that matter comes by way of the grace of God to all who are His. He knows where his strength comes from and he knows most assuredly in whom he believes.**

**(4) This is an interesting construction because the prophet could be calling up a name for God...**

- ***"God of my strength"- Elohim ma' uzzi ..***

- **Followed by a title *"Lord"*= God Almighty...God the Almighty One**

- **All of this to clarify where the strength comes from and how he is able to have feet like the deer and how he will be able to stand on the high places in that Day.**

**5. He talks a lot about "waiting on the LORD" in this book. What does that truly look like in our day to day?**

**6. What does this chapter and this book tells us today? In other words, what has strengthened your faith from what we have studied?**

**7. Conclusion: The prophet began his book with doubt and questions even after receiving God's vision. But he ends with this prayer of praise and joy in the LORD. He is now so satisfied with the LORD and His answer that he did in fact write it down and gave it all to the choirmaster realizing the importance of these words for God's people in the future. Matthew Henry says here, *"He that is afflicted and has prayed aright (according to God's Word) may then find it easy and merry to even sing the psalms."***

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

May 13, 2020

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. What would you say was the main point (s) of Habakkuk?

2. How do those apply to us today?

### C. Obadiah

#### 1. Introduction

a. When was this prophecy written?

**(1) It does not say, though there are indicators that we will look at that may give us a clue.**

**(2) There are a number of theories...**

- **One because people work harder at trying to discover who this man is than caring about what he is saying.**

- **2 main theories:**

- **9<sup>th</sup> Century- a prince of Judah under Jehoshaphat**

- **Early 6<sup>th</sup> Century- a prophet sent by God.**

**(3) The later date... 6<sup>th</sup> Century seems most likely to me.**

**(4) Edomites have a long history of hating and abusing their brothers and sisters... see Amos 1:11-12 as an example. Isaiah also gives a particular scathing indictment against them as well.**

**(5) Specifically vs. 10-14 seems to indicate what the Edomite's were doing before and right after Jerusalem's fall.**

- **They had been moving into southern Judah for some time by hook or by crook. As Judah weakened they took advantage to gain more territory and ground to claim since land was so important then.**
- **Since Zedekiah was put in place by the Babylonians as a vassal king the Edomites had been taking extreme advantage of their brothers...even working for and with Babylon to keep Judah in its place. 597-586 BC.**
- **So with this and other things we will look at seems to put this right before the fall of Jerusalem making Obadiah the last pre-exilic prophet.**
- **The fact that this is a vision and it does not appear the Jerusalem has fallen yet.**

b. What do we know about the man, Obadiah?

**(1) His name means "worshiper of the LORD" or servant of the LORD"**

- **How fitting... almost as if his parents knew what he would become.**

- **Or perhaps, devote parents wishing him to be used mightily by the LORD...which He does.**

**(2) Obadiah is a common name in Israel...and in the Bible altogether it is used of 13 individuals...**

- **The pious governor of Ahab's palace who hid one hundred of Jehovah's prophets (1 Kings 18:3-16).**
- **The founder of a family of the lineage of David (1 Chron. 3:21).**

- **A man of Issachar of the family of Tola (1 Chron. 7:3).**
  - **Son of Azel, a descendant of King Saul (1 Chron. 8:38; 9:44).**
  - **Son of Shemaiah, a Levite of Netophah (1 Chron. 9:16).**
  - **A Gadite who joined David at Ziklag (1 Chron. 12:9).**
  - **Father of Ishmaiah, prince of Zebulun in David's time (1 Chron. 27:19).**
  - **A prince of Judah, sent by Jehoshaphat to teach the people (2 Chron. 17:7).**
  - **A Levite, one of the overseers of the workmen who repaired the Temple in Josiah's time (2 Chron. 34:12).**
  - **The prophet of Judah who lived over 550 years before Christ (Obadiah 1).**
  - **Son of Jehiel, a descendant of Joab who returned from exile with Ezra (Ezra 8:9).**
  - **A priest who, on behalf of his father's house, sealed the covenant (Neh. 10:5).**
  - **A Levite, founder of a family of sanctuary porters (Neh. 12:25).**
- (3) **He does not tell us about himself or his family choosing instead to remain humble and a servant of the LORD carrying out His will as His prophet. As with other prophets that tell us little to nothing about themselves they make it clear with their silence that they don't see themselves or their service as the focus of anything.**
- (4) **He knows a lot about what goes on in Jerusalem and a lot about Edom so the thinking is that he is from Jerusalem or a close suburb since he is in a position to see what Edom has been doing to Judah.**
- c. **Who is this prophecy against? Edom. Who is Edom?**
- (1) **The Edomites are the people descended from Esau, the son of Isaac and Rebekah and the brother of Jacob (Genesis 25:19-34). Esau was nicknamed "Edom" (which means, "red")...The Bible refers to the red pottage that Esau wanted so badly to sell his birthright so he was given the "nickname" Edom.**
- (2) **Metaphorically it seems to speak to the fact that he was bloody from birth and then in life...they have not been "good relatives" for the most part.**
- **When Israel came out of Egypt and wanted to pass through the land of the Edomites to enter into the Promised Land, the Edomites wouldn't let them (Numbers 20:14-21)**
  - **The Edomites opposed Saul and were conquered under David and Solomon (1 Samuel 14:47, 2 Samuel 8:14, 1 Kings 9:26)**
  - **In the days of King Jehoshaphat of Judah, Edom joined with Moab and Ammon to attack Judah, but the Lord fought for Judah and defeated them (2 Chronicles 20:1-27)**
  - **The Edomites successfully rebelled against King Jehoram of Judah (2 Kings 8:16-22)**
  - **Centuries later, King Herod the Great (Luke 1:5) was an Edomite.**
- (3) **They are subjugated under the Maccabeans during the Intertestamental period but they were allowed to stay in their land as long as they followed Jewish law.**

**(4) Then there was their final end-**

- **They fought side by side with the Jews during the rebellion against Rome in 66-70 A.D. and were crushed by Rome, never to be heard of as a people again along with their Jewish brothers. The predictions of Obadiah 1:10 and 1:18 were proven true.**
- **But interesting fact...many of the Edomites fought with Rome against the Israelites ...hoping to reclaim their home land as they had had it before.**

**2. What is the prophet communicating in verses 1-4?**

**a. Vs. 1 tells us that he has been given this vision by God since it is spoken in a similar way to the other prophets. *"Thus says the Lord God concerning Edom..."* leaving no doubt as to where this vision...read prophesy comes from.**

**(1) Lord= Adonai= is a plural form of the original allowing for a plurality in the Godhead...think Trinity...Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

- **The title means the Mighty One or the Sovereign One.**
- **Speaking to His omnipotence and authority.**

**(2) God=Elohim= is also plural form of El which allows for the plurality in the Godhead- father Son and Holy Spirit that all true believers believe.**

- **Elohim only occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures and in no other place in ancient Semitic languages.**
- **Elohim= Creator and Judge in the traditional Jewish view. And Supreme One emphasizing that Elohim is all power and all mighty.**

**(3) Yahweh- LORD= *"I am that I am"* His personal name in singular form. This speaks to:**

- **His eternality (*"...beginning and the End, ...the alpha and the omega...ancient of days"*). When a child asks, "Who made God." Every wise parent can say, "Nobody made God. God is and has always been." And on top of that He will never end.**
- **His self-existence. He is wholly other than any and all of the rest of His creation.**
- **His Name which tells us that He is relational because names denote relationship...**
  - **That God would want us to know His name shows that while He doesn't need a relationship with anyone...He desires one with His people.**
  - **It is His covenantal name in that His name communicates in relationship that covenant that He made in the Godhead that would bring His Father glory and would ultimately save His elect people from their sins. God calls Himself Yahweh when he enters into a covenant relationship with Abraham....saying that he is forever faithful!**
  - **By giving us His name this also communicates that He is with us.**
- **"I am that I am" – Yahweh speaks to His unchangeableness and His faithfulness to His very nature.**

- b. He says next, ***“We have heard a report from the LORD...”***- the “we” here is himself, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and the other prophets who have spoken of Edom’s demise.
- c. God reminds His faithful of Edom’s eventual demise to reassure His people of His divine justice at work...Edom will be overthrown by God providential use of the lawless...like He was using Babylon to judge Judah’s faithlessness.
- d. It is the righteous purposes of God that determines the history of the world not the evil pursuits of men.
- e. God’s judgment against Edom...
  - (1) Which speaks of a time 600 years from now for its ultimate fulfillment.
  - (2) But speaks of some of the day to day judgments they will encounter after the fall of Jerusalem under Babylon who will see them for what they are...men who have no “honor” who would give up their own relatives to slavery and death.
  - (3) God has the prophet lift up a call to arms against them...
    - They will lose their standing on the world stage by the time the Persians come on the scene but they will continue to be a bane to Israel
    - Then when the Maccabeans took over under Judas and Hyrcanus the Edomites were subjugated by Israel even though they were allowed to stay in their homeland as long as they followed Jewish law even circumcision.
    - But then after the last fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD they as a people group are never heard from again.
  - (4) His judgment is because of Edom’s pride in this section...how is that displayed?
    - There is an interesting play on words here in verse 2- ***“Behold, I have made you a little thing among the heathens/goiim.”***
      - Interesting in that God compares them to pagan/heathens... so there is no question that they are NOT covenant children even though he and Jacob were brothers.
      - Saying that in comparison to the other nations you are tiny with no reason to be proud...
      - Also saying you are greatly despised by even those you think are friends...thinking you are something when you are nothing...you have no reason to be proud and yet...verse 3-4.
      - The play on words is that they think they have much to be prideful in but they do not...they just do not realize it.
    - They live in the rocks and at the tops of mountains which has given them a sense of superiority-
    - They believed they could not be defeated even though they were among the smallest of people in the area.
    - ***“Who will bring me down to the ground?”*** speaks about their arrogance over all men and their arrogant attitude towards God.
    - But God will bring them down in due time...think Prov. 16:18- ***“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”***

- f. **We give a lot of grief to Esau and/or Edom but...We are not much different from him...**
    - (1) Look at how often we think of ourselves before others.**
    - (2) We like to take credit for things when credit is always due to God for good things.**
    - (3) Many would still sell their birthright, if that was worth anything anymore, for power or prestige.**
    - (4) Like we see in the NT we will seek to destroy our brothers and we will show favoritism if it will help us get ahead in this life.**
    - (5) Any type of violence against our neighbor which begins with our brothers is equal to the violence and pride of Edom.**
3. So what is he communicating in verses 5-9?
- a. **Remember this is prophecy and so the plunderers that will affect Edom are Babylon, Persia, Maccabeans and Rome...all of these are in mind.**
  - b. **Because you have dealt badly with God people you will be repaid in the way you treated them....A standard judgment on those who misuse God's people. See Gen 12: 3- *"I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse..."***
  - c. **God has providentially shut their eyes to the fact that now their previous allies are using and abusing them, *"...those who eat your bread have set a trap beneath you...you have no understanding."* So far has their pride blinded them.**
  - d. **Verses 8, 11 and 15 speak of "on that day" or something to that affect...we are to again remember this is prophecy and this will be done to Edom a number of times before their eventual total destruction.**
  - e. **Thinking of vs 9...**
    - (1) Consider Isaiah 34:5-7- *"For my sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; behold, it descends for judgment upon Edom, upon the people I have devoted to destruction. The Lord has a sword; it is sated with blood; it is gorged with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah, a great slaughter in the land of Edom. Wild oxen shall fall with them, and young steers with the mighty bulls. Their land shall drink its fill of blood, and their soil shall be gorged with fat."***
    - (2) An added curse here, *"And your mighty men shall be dismayed..."* these men will SEE what is going on and be greatly discouraged, but it also speaks of a spirit of discouragement and fear to the point of being paralyzed having been given to them By God.**
4. What is the ground for God displeasure in section vs. 10-14 and what is His judgment?
- a. **They are convicted and judged because of the charge of *"violence done to your brother Jacob"***
    - (1) They did not stand with their brothers until at the end in 70 AD.**
    - (2) They laid their brothers to waste.**
    - (3) They traded in their flesh.**

- (4) They used them as slaves.**
  - (5) And they aided Israel's enemies in doing the same.**
  - b. They prospered from their brother's misery.**
5. What is God doing with all of these "do not's..." in verses 12-14?
- a. God is telling them in this prophecy what not to do in verses 12-14..they still have time...the judgment is upon them but not just yet...**
  - b. Just like with Nineveh God issues a call to repentance which is always an about face in behavior...so He commands them once again to not do what they know they shouldn't be doing.**
6. Now, what is he communicating in verses 15-21?
- a. Vs. 15 and 16, the prophet is summing up what he has said...**
    - (1) Judgement is coming...the time is fixed and it is near as was said in the other prophets.**
    - (2) Judgment not just on Edom but on every nation that has been judged by God through the many prophets.**
    - (3) Yes even judgement on Judah who will not be left out ...but Edom will drink from the cup of wrath like all other non-believers and abusers of my covenant peoples.**
  - b. Vs.17-21 has an "immediate" and a "long term" vision of things ...**
    - (1) God will save His people even unto exile.**
    - (2) God will then bring His remnant back for they are holy.**
    - (3) God will save all His holy people through Christ Jesus alone.**
    - (4) Now what about the "They" at the end of verse 18, who will consume them**
      - This will be a combined nation during the Maccabean period will subjugate these people under Jewish law though many will also flee.**
      - But this also points to the Romans used of God to carry out His final annihilation of Edom...never to be heard from again. After 70 AD these folks as a people group are not spoken of again.**
    - (5) Those in exile will be delivered...no earthly exile will ever remove completely God's chosen people from the reach of His love.**
      - There will be punishment for 70 plus or minus years for their sinfulness just as God said.**
      - But just as He said His remnant would return and they did. God disciplines His people often for the purpose of restoration through our repentance.**
    - (6) God's people will return and eventually possess the land of Esau for a little while under the Maccabeans...**
      - A unified Jewish nation under the Maccabeans will subjugate the Edomites.**
      - Dispensationalists believe that this is an indicator that the nation of Israel was to become a country before the LORD returns.**



**(7) God's people are the Light of the world...a fire and a flame for Christ is like a refiner's fire....and we are in Christ. We are the "saviors" spoken of in vs 21- those ambassadors for Christ to a fallen Edom like world. God's representatives to bring His Word to everyone...we do not "save"...God does that...but we are His instruments toward salvation for those who are His who He has chosen and those He will call in due time.**

**(8) Rev. 11:15- *"Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.'"* The gates of hell shall not prevail against the kingdom of God...the Church...but God's church shall prevail against hell by the grace and power of God in Christ.**

**(9) Rev. 21:24-27- *"By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life."* Christ saves His elect and makes them holy even to the end.**

7. Just to sum up ...what is the message that Obadiah has for us 2600 years later?

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
October 21, 2020

D. Prayer

E. Review

3. What would you say was the main point (s) of the pre-exilic Minor Prophets?
4. How do those apply to us today?
5. Where we have been: where we are:
  - y. Jonah- 9th or 8th Cent. Prophet (probably early 8th Cent. 790's)- Northern Kingdom
  - z. Amos- 8th Cent. Prophet- prophet to the Northern Kingdom
  - aa. Hosea- 8th Cent. Prophet (750 -730 or so)-prophet in the Northern Kingdom
  - bb. Micah- 8th Cent. Prophet (750-686 somewhere in there)- Judah
  - cc. Nahum- 7th Cent. Prophet (660-650)- Judah
  - dd. Zephaniah- 7th Cent. Prophet- (640-615 or so)- Judah
  - ee. Habakkuk- 7th Cent. Prophet (609-598)- Judah
  - ff. Obadiah- 6th Cent. Prophet (550's)- Judah - last of the pre-exilic Minor Prophets
6. Where we are and where we are going: Post-exilic Minor Prophets
  - gg. Joel- 6th Cent. Prophet (525-500 or so)- returnees from exile.
  - hh. Haggai- 6th Cent. Prophet (520-5 or 6 months)- prophet of the restoration a call to build the Temple
  - ii. Zechariah- 6th Cent. Prophet (along with Haggai) )- prophet of the restoration
    - (5) Ezra- 5th Century priest after the exile
    - (6) Nehemiah- 5th Century Governor after the exile.(430-400)
      - I will be including a chronology that shows where Ezra and Nehemiah fit into our study of Zechariah so we can get a sense of where they fit in to this timeline...even Queen Esther.
      - I include this not because they are prophets in the usual sense but because they affirm and confirm what the prophets spoke of during this time of the 6th and 5th Century BC.
      - These 2 books are one book in the Hebrew Scriptures...considered to be part of the historical section of the OT.
  - jj. Malachi- 5th Cent. Prophet (460-400 or so) – the last prophet of the restoration.

F. Joel

1. Introduction

- a. **His name means “Jehovah is God” or “the LORD is God”...or... “the one to whom Yahweh is God- a worshiper of God”- conjugation of Yahweh and El in Hebrew forms the name we pronounce Joel according to Jewish tradition. Joel was a very common name among the Jews ...possibly seeking God’s favor.**
- b. **Only mention of his name...the prophet Joel... is here and in Acts- Acts 2:16-21**
- c. **He is the son of Pethuel (“persuaded of/by God”) who was apparently a faithful followers of the Lord, hence the giving of his name.**

- d. He prophesied to the returnees...reminding them of how things were ...a tradition that had been handed down to him or just as likely given to him by God Himself since it is not likely that he lived from before the exile to the return.
- e. There is no mention of a ruling king and no illusion to a king. And he makes no reference to the Northern Kingdom so it appears that he is talking to a combined people of the LORD at Jerusalem.
- f. While many still “fight” for a dating of either the 9<sup>th</sup> Cent or late 6<sup>th</sup> Cent. pre-exile dating saying that he was the last pre-exilic prophet, but most scholars today seem to think of him as being post-exilic prophet. However, we must not “fight” over the dating as Calvin said, *“As there is no certainty it is better to leave the time in which he taught undecided; and as we shall see, this is of no great importance...his message is timeless. Not to know the time of Hosea would be to readers a great loss, for there are many parts which could not be explained without a knowledge of history; but as to Joel there is less need of this, for the import of his doctrine is evident, though his time be obscure and uncertain.”*
- g. Extra evidence (just for this work not for handout or discussion unless comes up):

(1) There is no way to exactly date the book (G. Campbell Morgan said it

was one of the earliest or one of the latest of the prophets) from internal evidence two dates have been suggested:

- a post-exilic date
  - it must be related to a threatened invasion of Judah in the metaphor of a locust plague.
  - 3:2 implies that Israel has already been exiled. The name “Israel” is now used for Judah, 2:27; 3:1-2,16.
  - 3:6 speaks of a Greek slave trade, which implies a post-exilic date.
  - 3:1,17 implies that Judah has already been exiled and is in danger of being invaded again if her sin continued.
  - there is no mention of a king, which implies a post-exilic setting. Joel addressed his message to the elders and priests.
  - the invaders are called “northerners,” which implies a Mesopotamian (Assyria, Babylon, Persia) invasion, 2:20.
  - Baal worship characteristic of the pre-exilic period is not mentioned.
- a pre-exilic date
  - there seems to be a reference to the Temple, 1:9, 13-14; 2:17.
  - the enemies mentioned in 3:4,6,8 (Phoenicia, Philistia, Edom, Sabeans) are pre-exilic, not post-exilic.

(2) from external evidence

- The location of the book in the Hebrew canon implies a pre-exilic date.
- It may have been placed next to Amos because they both speak of the “day of YHWH” and use locust invasions as symbols of judgment. Also, the book alludes to a positive visitation for blessing, not judgment. This fits the post-exilic setting.

- **Seems to fit during the time period of Zerubbabel below.**

**(3) Theories as to the date based on an invasion of Palestine:**

- **during the reign of Joash (837-800 B.C.)**
  - **during the reign of Uzziah (783-742 B.C.)**
  - **during the reign of Zedekiah (598-586 B.C.)**
  - **during the time of Zerubbabel (during reign of Darius I, 522-486 B.C.)**
  - **during the time of Malachi (430 B.C.)**
  - **a futuristic eschatological invasion of God's people**
- h. For those who took the time to read through this short book in preparation for tonight what would you say are the main themes of this book?
- (1) God's absolute sovereignty and His providential actions over His creation is paramount.**
- (2) The central message focuses on "the day of the LORD"— judgment on God's people if they do not follow His expressed will and then judgment upon His enemies According to His promise.**
- (3) Repentance and its continual import for the people of God come what may.**

2. Joel 1

- a. Who is Joel writing to? And what is His intent that the people do with what he writes?
- (1) All the inhabitants of the land at that time.**
- (2) To us, generations later.**
- (3) He intends that the leaders and people will tell this story...this event of God's judgment and eventual restoration of His people. Pass this on to all their children throughout time.**
- (4) Like all the other events of Redemptive history we are to know and recount those event...The Passover requirement for those of the OT...the Crucifixion and Resurrection for the NT....the works of the LORD in judgment and Restoration...the Gospel.**
- b. Think with me a minute...in verses 1-20. If we accept the timing of Joel as being post-exilic then we also have to believe that God Brought His people back into the Promised Land after a time of exile in Babylon and then Persia to a famine. If Joel is accurate and since it is God's Word we must believe it is, then God caused a plague of locust to fall upon the land right after the land had had a Sabbath rest bringing the people back at a time of almost utter devastation. As I said think with me a minute on this:
- (1) What difficulties and disappointments are they facing?
- **They have just (within the last few years) returned to Jerusalem and it is rubble.**
  - **They are rebuilding the city, the temple and the priesthood/leadership structure.**
  - **Now a devastating locust plague strikes. Is this the locust that were prophesied in Amos 3 and 7? Or are these yet another time when God pours out His wrath on His people.**
  - **In an agricultural society the loss of crops was equivalent to the loss of life. See 1:8.**

- **As they were rebuilding this would add to their hardship 10 fold.**
  - **Vs. 12- *"...gladness dries up from the children of man."***
- (2) Why would God do this to the land and to the people He was bringing back to rebuild His city and temple?
- **In reading Nehemiah and Ezra and Haggai and Zechariah we know that the people came back from exile and began to rebuild, but...**
  - **They also began to rebuild their lives, forsaking the work on the city and the temple.**
  - **They even fell into some of their old sins by marrying outside the Jewish faith.**
  - **They were becoming self-centered and prideful.**
  - **So there was plenty of reason for God to send this reminder of His judgment upon them.**
- (3) How does this passage help us in facing loss, disappointment and grief even in the midst of our own plague called Covid-19?
- **This is God's will for us at this time. It is not an accident in time. It is not Mother Nature run amok. This did not happen by chance. This is God's will...just like this locust plague was God's will.**
  - **Since it is God's will there is much to learn and much to mourn in our behavior and the behavior of the Church.**
  - **Since this is God's will it is for our good...even when we don't know how or why. In vs 8 the prophet doesn't sugar coat anything...this is going to hurt. The hurt is real...it is supposed to be to be meaningful.**
  - **Since this is God's will we need to lean into Him at times like these more than ever.**
  - **Acknowledging God's sovereignty goes a long way to helping our grieving process.**
  - **We are a people who will choose every day to avoid suffering at all cost and yet there are obviously some things for us to learn that we wouldn't learn otherwise. Christians need to learn from Joel's approach to suffering. Suffering is real. God uses it to teach us, train us, discipline us, and reveal His love for us.**
  - **Many ask the question how could a "Good God" do or allow the things that happen to happen? It may seem to them that God's judgments are inconsistent and God's actions give problems to Christianity. But this never troubles the biblical writers because they have a far higher vision of the majesty and holiness of God and a far more accurate estimation of the sin and depravity of men and women than do those who raise the question.**
- (4) Why is he commanding the priests/ ministers to repent in verse 13?
- **So the people will have an example to follow.**
  - **So there worship and life will be affected by repentance...calling of the fast.**

- **They do not have the appropriate sacrifices to make because the land has been devastated...so worship/atonement cannot be made for the people or will not be able to be made any time soon.**
- **They are to lead their people to God.**
- **Look at how Jesus answers the dilemmas in Luke 13. What is Jesus saying?**
  - **When we listen carefully we hear Him saying that those who object to us saying that God is responsible for Covid, locust, famine or war is that they are asking the wrong question.**
  - **The right question is Why haven't these disasters come upon us? Why haven't they destroyed us?**
  - **Our problem is that we have forgotten just how sinful we are and what we all deserve...and that it generally takes a disaster of unparalleled proportions to wake us from sin's blindness. Think 9/11...think Covid.**
  - **Bottom line is this for Joel...both the delays in God's judgment-the periods of grace and the previews of judgments in such catastrophic events like a locust plague or a Covid plague are for our good, that we might repent and keep on repenting.**
- **They are to lead the people in this for *"the day of the LORD is near..."***
  - **The idea behind the phrase the day of the LORD is that this is Gods' time. Man has his "day," and the LORD has His day.**
  - **In the ultimate sense, the day of the LORD is fulfilled with Jesus judges the earth and returns in glory.**
  - **In a lesser sense, a time of judgment as Judah experienced with the locusts and drought is also an example of the day of the LORD.**
  - **Vs, 17-20- The seed shrivels ... they have no pasture ... the granaries are torn down because the grain has dried up the flocks of sheep suffer punishment ... fire has devoured the open pastures ... the water brooks are dried up: Joel vividly describes a devastating drought. It affects everything in Judah, and wildfires ravage the dry land. It looks forward to the times when there will be draught in the land of God's Word.**
- **Joel teaches the people how to pray during their mourning in verses 19-20...specifically and to the point. No beating around the bush...what is it you mourn...be honest with God!**

See Below and Interview with Joel by Sam O'Neal

# **What is the Book of Joel about and how does it apply to us today?**

Sam O'Neal

To answer your question, I thought it would be fun to pretend to interview Joel.

**Is it true that you're a real Old Testament prophet?**

Yes, that's correct.

**You were sent by God to pronounce judgment on the nation of Israel?**

I was sent to the Israelites, yes. But I'm one of the minor prophets—Habakkuk, Obadiah and so on. People usually have a hard time remembering guys like us.

**But you got to do the doom and judgment thing, right? You went around shouting, "Thus saith the Lord!"**

Oh, yes. I told the Israelites to weep, mourn, and despair. I told them a day of darkness and gloom was coming because God was going to send an army to punish their sins.

**All right! This is getting good. And was it a big army?**

It sure was. I remember saying, "Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine."

**Wow—was it the Assyrians?**

No.

**It had to be the Babylonians, then. I heard those guys would go nuts with their bronze swords and ...**

Actually, it was a big army of locusts.

**Um, you mean those mutated freak locusts from Revelation? The ones with heads like lions and tails like giant scorpions?**

These were regular locusts. They were a couple of inches long and ate plants.

**Wait a minute. You, a big time doom and gloom prophet, threatened Israel with flying bugs? What kind of punishment was that?**

There were millions and millions of locusts, and they ate up every piece of vegetation in the whole country! They even stripped the bark away from the trees, so the branches looked like white bones rattling in the wind. That meant the animals had no food to eat, which meant the people ran out of food pretty quickly, too.

**That's kinda inconvenient, but ...**

Also, the fact that God sent locusts was a very big deal because of what the bugs symbolized. Locusts were one of the 10 plagues God used to free the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, remember? So when they attacked Israel, it was like God was saying, "You guys have become as bad as the Egyptians because of your sin."

**That makes sense. I guess it was pretty cool punishment after all.**

Are you crazy? It was a horrible tragedy; there wasn't anything "cool" about it! I think you've got the wrong idea about prophets. We never enjoyed telling people that bad things were going to happen—except Jonah, I guess. That guy was a little off.

**But wasn't it a little satisfying to be a messenger of God's wrath?**

You're missing the point entirely. God didn't send us to yell at the Israelites. He sent us to warn them about the consequences of their sin, and to give them a chance to ask for forgiveness. He was being merciful, not angry.

**Yeah, I guess I do appreciate God forgiving my sins instead of sending flying insects after me.**

Exactly.



Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
October 28, 2020

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Who all is Joel writing to? And what is His intent that the people do with what he writes?
  - a. **All the inhabitants of the land at that time.**
  - b. **To us, generations later.**
  - c. **He intends that the leaders and people will tell this story...this event of God's judgment and eventual restoration of His people. Pass this on to all their children throughout time.**
  - d. **Like all the other events of Redemptive history we are to know and recount those event...The Passover requirement for those of the OT...the Crucifixion and Resurrection for the NT....the works of the LORD in judgment and Restoration...the Gospel.**
2. In the first chapter what things are being highlighted and why?
  - a. **A locust plague...and the devastation of all vegetation in the land.**
  - b. **The difficulties and disappointments in what they found when they returned.**
  - c. **That God knows and understands their being devastated.**
  - d. **God tells them to lament and pray for forgiveness.**
    - (1) **First to the people, though they may not "get it"**
    - (2) **Then the priests/elders- so the leaders can be an example of what we are to do when crisis occurs.**
    - (3) **The Day of the LORD is near...needs to be on our minds and thoughts always...Paul reminds us of this as far as Christ's second coming but also...every major event in one way or another is a Day of the LORD event.**
    - (4) **Joel teaches the people how to pray during their mourning in verses 19-20...specifically and to the point. No beating around the bush...what is it you mourn...be honest with God!**

C. Joel 2

1. If you were to wrap up this chapter in a few words what would you say he is communicating?
  - a. **The Day of the Lord and the Restoration of the Lord.**
  - b. **Repent and return to the LORD.**
2. What is the prophet communicating in verses 1-11?
  - a. **"Blow a Trumpet in Zion..."**
    - (1)**this is not a call to worship but rather a call to prepare for the coming judgement...**
    - (2)**This is a call as much chapters 1 and 2 say to repent before the LORD their God in the midst of all this devastation.**
    - (3)**In vs. 15 it is a call to worship...the Shofar/ Ram's horn was used to call the people to worship but also as a warning or call to arms.**
  - b. **"...for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near..."** and then again in vs. 11
    - (1)**The LORD's judgement is at hand if His people do not repent.**

- (2) If as most people believe given the Hebrew that Joel's reference to the great locust plague is in the recent past, what day do you think he is ultimately referring to and why?**
- **As a prophet of the LORD to these returnees he is calling them to repent in the midst of crisis...**
  - **As a prophet of the LORD he is calling us to repent in times of crisis so they and we are prepared with the right mind and heart for His ultimate Return.**
- (3) This phrase is found 19 times in the whole OT...5 of which are found in this small book/prophecy.**
- c. Verses 2-11a we see what the locust left behind...those who were still in the land that didn't get carted off to Babylon would have watched this devastation occur.**
- d. Locust plagues are not uncommon...even today...there has been a huge infestation again in Africa this year (2020) – “of biblical proportions” some news outlets have stated.**
- 3. What does the LORD tell them to do...and by extension us... before the Day of the LORD occurs in verses 12 -17?**
- a. Repenting and returning to the LORD...this is a declaration...a command!**
- (1) He says not to rend their garments...because it had just become a show...not the real thing.**
- (2) But rending their hearts...complete contrition:**
- **a deep remorse of having offended God 1<sup>st</sup> and then 2<sup>ndly</sup>, offending another party...**
  - **a full disclosure of the sin...**
  - **confession with no attempt to excuse or justify behavior...**
  - **confession with no attempt to blame anyone else in the process....**
  - **resolve to turn away from the sin...**
  - **a willingness to make restitution where possible...How can I make up for this wrong that I have caused?**
  - **a thankful heart for whatever comes; restoration or judgment.**
- (3) Then return to the LORD your God who is:**
- **Gracious**
  - **Merciful**
  - **Slow to anger**
  - **Abounding in steadfast love**
  - **Relenting over disaster.**
- b. Then a full blown and true worship follows.**
- c. The Priests and ministers are to continue call God's people to repentance and asking God to forgive them in full earnestness.**
- d. As Martin Luther said our life is to be a life of repentance before the LORD. The other Reformers emphasized this as well so that we can be always prepared to meet the LORD.**

4. From our perspective...what event (S) is he referring to in verses 18-32?
  - a. **A Restoration of His people? When did this restoration happen?**
    - (1) There were periods of peace during the Intertestamental period but there was no restoration like the one here discussed.**
    - (2) Armies came and armies went during this time even winning back their land for a time under the Maccabeans...but even that was for a short time.**
    - (3) The rest of the Minor Prophets show us a people after they returned that weren't too attached to their calling in the long haul...**
  - b. **Future Restoration ..the Day of the LORD's Return...the New Heavens and New Earth... after all that is here is burned and consumed by fire...vs. 3.**
5. According to this last section do believers have any reason to fear the Day of the LORD? Can you support your answer from this text alone?

## Lessons from the Minor Prophets

November 11, 2020

### A. Prayer

### B. Review

1. What is the main thing the Prophet calls God's people to do in chapters 1 and 2? Why?
  - a. **The Day of the LORD- reflected in the judgement of the locusts upon the land just after it had recovered...(Rom. 8:19-23)**
  - b. **So with this in mind they are called to repentance.**
    - (1)**Repentance= true contrition**
    - (2)**A deep remorse of having 1stly offended God and then 2ndly, offended another party...**
      - **a full disclosure of the sin...**
      - **confession with no attempt to excuse or justify behavior...**
      - **confession with no attempt to blame anyone else in the process....**
      - **resolve to turn away from the sin...**
      - **a willingness to make restitution where possible...How can I make up for this wrong that I have caused?**
      - **a thankful heart for whatever comes; restoration or judgment.**
  - c. **From the women's study book on Luke:**
    - (1)***"Real repentance isn't a feeling or mere words. It has teeth, action, and perceptible change. John was calling these men and women, and still calls us through his words, to an actual adjustment of conduct. As Sinclair Ferguson says, 'Repentance throws into reverse gear the patterns of sin that have dominated you.'"***
    - (2)***"What about us? Does the call to repentance offend you? Do you consider yourself too mature for such a basic movement in your life with the Lord? Do you close your ears or gloss over the call to repentance given by John, deciding it is only for those who have never aligned themselves with this king? Beware, dear one. In this kingdom, we never get beyond repentance. It is the starting place, the middle place, and the ending place of life with the king."***
2. What is God teaching these people in the midst of the devastation described that they came back to?
  - a. **Suffering is to define us as believers.**
  - b. **Suffering will always be part of our lives. Jesus said, *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."* John 16:33**
  - c. **Suffering is in the world so we will be looking to a better kingdom...a better country than the one in which we live.**
  - d. **Suffering exists to keep us humble and focused on God's work in our lives...not what we can do for ourselves.**

- e. ***"Suffering is a Gift. Moses prays that the Lord will help them see their suffering as a gift from Him (Ps. 90:15- "Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, and as many years as we have seen evil."). We live wisely when we stop fighting our suffering, embrace it as a gift from God, and submit to its sanctifying work in our lives."-Sarah Ivell***
  - f. **Suffering then defines us and we are to remember that Jesus suffered and that He has overcome the world and we will on That Day know it fully!**
  - g. **One author put it this way, *"It seems that those closest to Jesus and His kingdom will be those who know the most profound suffering, but also the most profound joy."***
3. What is the main event in that seems to be in the mind of the Prophet when he speaks of the Day of the Lord? And how might that image be comforting to these people?

C. Joel 3

- 1. What is chapter 3 about? Let's look at it together.
  - a. **Mostly judgment...Valley of Jehoshaphat= Armageddon! Vs. 1-3**
  - b. **God's sovereignty:**
    - (1) **What are the nations to the Sovereign One? Vs. 4**
    - (2) **He outlines His charges and his judgment as the Judge over all the earth. Vs. 5-8**
    - (3) **He commands the nations that oppose Him and His people to prepare for war... Vs. 9**
    - (4) **He commands them to get every possible weapon they can come up with to do battle. Why?**
    - (5) **He commands that they will come ...vs 11**
    - (6) **He will bring His warriors to bear and the enemy will be enraged by God enraging them.**
    - (7) **See Rev. 14:15-18**
    - (8) **Vs. 14- The idea of the "Valley of Decision" has been used in countless evangelistic meetings to show people that they stand in the "Valley of Decision," and must decide for or against Jesus. Joel's context is exactly the opposite and more biblical. Man does indeed stand in the valley of decision, but it is God who does the deciding, not man. This is a valley of judgment.**
    - (9) **Vs. 15-16- Last day imagery for sure we see this in Isaiah's prophecy of the Last day and in Revelation as well. The fulfillment of a promise to always be our refuge and stronghold.**
    - (10) **Vs. 17-18- God says in verse 17...**
      - **Because of all this, all that I have done., am doing, will do...in THAT Day you will know me.**
      - **On top of that "strangers" will never again pass through Jerusalem!**
      - **Then in verse 18, "And in that day..."**
      - **When will this happen? Rev. 21:27-2:3**
    - (11) **Vs. 19- a picture of how God will deal with His enemies finally in the End...this is true today as well... Egypt never has had the influence of former years... and Edom...well we know where it was.**

2. With all of this judgment we also find promises and blessing for God's people. Name as many as you can find...(read the verse or phrase).

- a. 3:1
- b. 3:16b
- c. 3:17- See Rev. 21:27-22:3
- d. 3:18
- e. 3:19-20

(1) God will show mercy to His people, and grant them forgiveness.

This prophecy of Joel, which began with the desperate plague of locusts, ends with a promise of restoration and redemption.

(2) This prophet has many things similar to Ezekiel, ends his prophecy in nearly the same way: Ezekiel says of the glory of the Church, "*Yahweh shammah*", **THE LORD IS THERE**. Joel says, "*Yahweh shochen betsiyon*", **THE LORD DWELLETH IN ZION**. Both point out the continued indwelling of Christ among His people forever.

(3) God compares the past to the future in this prophecy...because everything is leading up to the Day of the LORD's final judgment which then leads directly to the complete restoration when He makes all things new.

(4) But until that Day of the LORD, God's people are constantly exhorted to repent, believe and act in God's will.

(5) The Reformers did the same. Martin Luther's first 3 Theses said,

- *"Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, in saying, 'Repent ye, etc.,' intended that the whole life of His believers on earth should be a constant penance.*
- *And the word "penance" neither can, nor may, be understood as referring to the Sacrament of Penance, that is, to confession and atonement as exercised under the priest's ministry.*
- *Nevertheless He does not think of inward penance only: rather is inward penance worthless unless it produces various outward mortifications of the flesh.*

3. In what way are all of these words a comfort and conviction for us today? In other words, what lessons does this book/prophecy have for us today? **Joel is a difficult book to get your head around unless you remember that these people have returned to nothing. The last time God had brought His people into the Promised Land it was filled with abundance...milk and honey...more than they could imagine. But not this time, the land and the Temple and the city were in ruin. They would have to begin from scratch and they were probably left scratching their heads as to why God would do what He did. They needed to live a life of repentance and they needed to trust in Him not their old ways...This was sort of a reset for these people who have been doing pretty well in captivity but sense the need to return home and rebuild their lives and faith in the LORD. They had good intentions ...but good intentions alone does not make for a strong spiritual life built on serving the LORD.**

D. Read Ezra 1-6 for biblical background.

- 1. Timeline 540 B.C.- 432 B.C.
  - a. 540 B.C.- Cyrus of Persia conquers Babylon.

- b. 539 B.C.- Cyrus (539-529) king of Persia (Ezra 1:1). (He has been for over 20 years.)
  - (1) This was the first year of his reign after conquering Babylon.
  - (2) Cyrus, conquering Babylon - makes Persia a world empire... Daniel had said Babylon would fall to the Persians (Daniel 5:25-31)
- c. 538 B.C.- Cyrus issues decree to begin construction of the temple (Ezra 1:1-4) Isaiah said Jews would return under Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem 200 years before Cyrus (Isaiah 44:26-28; 45:1,13)
- d. 536 B.C.- Zerubbabel returns with 49,897 (Ezra 2:2).
  - (1) Zerubbabel is the governor appointed by Cyrus and/or Darius (Haggai 1:14; Zechariah 4:9)
    - Sheshbazzar seems to have been his Babylonian name. (Ezra 1:8, 2:2)
    - He was the grandson of Jehoiakim (next to last king of Judah...from the line of King David).
    - In Haggai 1:1, the prophet seems to make this point of lineage.
  - (2) Joshua is the High Priest (Ezra 2:2; Haggai 1:14)
  - (3) Possibly it is here that we place the prophet Joel's prophesying. Or it could be between the order to stop work and the order to resume once Cyrus' decree is found and read to Darius I. (529-521)
  - (4) In the 7th month they built the altar and offered sacrifices (Ezra 3:1-7)
    - The 1<sup>st</sup> sacrifices since 586 B.C.
    - They held these in spite of the fact that the temple foundation had not even been laid.
- e. 535 B.C.- Work on temple is begun and stopped (Ezra 3:8-4:24) This is almost exactly 70 years after the 1<sup>st</sup> deportation in 605 B.C.
- f. 529 B.C.- Ahasuerus of Ezra 4:6 or Artaxerxes of Ezra 4:11-24 - issues decree to stop work on the temple, because of the complaints from his subjects that lived around Jerusalem.
- g. 522-521 B.C.- Darius I (521-486) issues restoration decree for completion of the temple.
- h. 520 B.C.-
  - (1) Haggai's first message comes in the 6<sup>th</sup> month- Aug. 29- Sept. 1, 520 (Ezra 5:1-2; Haggai 1:1-11)
  - (2) Also in the 6th month, Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>- 24<sup>th</sup> day - building begins again (Haggai 1:13-15)
  - (3) 7th month (October 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> day - Haggai's second appeal (Haggai 2:1-9)
  - (4) In the 8th month (Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>- November 1<sup>st</sup>) - Zechariah's opening address (Zechariah 1:1-6)
  - (5) In the 9th month (December 21<sup>st</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> day - Haggai's third and fourth appeals (Haggai 2:10-23)

- i. 519 B.C. -11th month February 24<sup>th</sup> day - Zechariah's tells of his 1st set of visions (Zechariah 1:7-6:15)
- j. 518 B.C.- 9th month (December 4th)- Zechariah's 2<sup>nd</sup> set of visions (Zechariah 7:1-14:21)
- k. 516 B.C.- 12th month (March 3<sup>rd</sup>)- temple completed (Ezra 6:15)
- l. 515 B.C.-1st month (April 14th - 21<sup>st</sup>) - Passover Celebrated in new temple.(Ezra 6:19-22) First time in 70 years the people had celebrated the Passover.
- m. 486-464 B.C.- Esther comes into play.
  - (1) Xerxes I (486-464) or Ahasuerus - fought wars against Greece.
  - (2) Esther becomes Queen - her marriage gave the Jews prestige at Persian court which effected Ezra's return and Nehemiah's position (Esther 2:16).
  - (3) Mordecai made Prime Minister
  - (4) Artaxerxes I (464-424) was the step-son of Esther (Ezra 7:1)
- n. 458 B.C.- Artaxerxes I issues decree for Ezra to return and establish worship (Ezra 7:1)- this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> return.
  - (1) Ezra goes from Babylon to Jerusalem with 1,754 men (Ezra 7:7,9; 8)
  - (2) This occurs 80 years after the Jews returned under Zerubbabel Ezra leads a reform of the Jews (Ezra 10:10,11)
- o. 444 B.C.- Artaxerxes I issues decree to Nehemiah to return and rebuild the city wall. (Nehemiah 2:1-8)
  - (1) Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:9ff)
  - (2) Ezra has been there 13 years by now.
  - (3) Nehemiah will be governor for 12 years and the wall is completed. In 432 Nehemiah went back to Artaxerxes court just as he said he would, but after 2 year asked to return and does.
- p. 432 B.C.- Malachi the prophet comes into play (Nehemiah 13, Malachi 2:11, 3:8)

#### E. Haggai

##### 1. The prophet

- a. **He was one of the older prophets...perhaps in his 80's or 90's since he seems to remember the original temple. Haggai 2:3**
- b. **His name means "festal" which may indicate ...as many have speculated...that he was born during one of the pilgrimage feast- Unleavened Bread, Pentecost or Feast of Weeks or feat of tabernacles/Tents.**
- c. **He is tenacious in proclaiming the LORD's message...not worried about how the people will receive the message...just putting it out there.**
- d. **This little book is so tied to exact dates that there is absolutely no question as to when it was written.**
- e. **Only prophesied for 5 months...August through December 520.**
- f. **Looking at the timeline you see that Zechariah and Haggai ministered at the same time at the beginning but due to Haggai's death or just**



**silence Zechariah will become the main prophetic voice over the next couple of years...until Malachi comes on the scene almost 100 years later.**

2. His message

- a. In short...the people were being disobedient at this time.**
- b. He calls upon God's people to *"give careful thought" "Consider your ways"...*something we all must do before making decisions.**
- c. They were more concerned with their own prosperity than they were with carrying out God's expressed will...rebuilding His temple.**

3. Introductory thoughts: I have always found this book of the Minor Prophets to be especially contemporary. Much like Ecclesiastes this book speaks to the heart of believers, in that, it exposes our general laziness when it comes to following God's will. How? Well, they came back to the Promised Land with full expectations and gladness that God was bringing them back only to encounter devastation due to locust and a crumbling mess of the city and Temple ...something that none of them had seen. But they began their work, it seems, with less than their best. They followed the desire of the priest and were able to begin sacrificing again at least. However, when a work stoppage was called they seemingly were glad to be able to begin rebuilding their lives rather than rebuild God's Temple. Even after they were given the ok to start up it seems they were so involved in eeking out a living ...they still were not doing what they had been commanded to do concerning God's Temple. So nothing they did was bringing any satisfaction...nothing they devised was going much of anywhere. They were barely getting by...there was even a drought in the land and the crops were not producing as they should be...and on top of that they weren't having children like they had been before and their animals were not producing either. With all of this going on they were so consumed with their own business they didn't even stop to think that this maybe God trying to get their attention. Like us today...we don't see God's hand of judgment or blessing because we are so caught up in our own business. When one thing doesn't work we try something else and we keep trying getting the same, worse or maybe sometimes better results...but nothing that gives us complete satisfaction and peace. We just don't see that we are being given a message of turn back to me...no matter what happens there is always an explanation for it in our minds. Just like these people. Until God sends His prophet...until God speaks to them through the prophet, Haggai. They hear God's word and they repent...a testament to the power of the Word. And in that repentance God reminds them of His presence which causes them to fear the LORD. But God doesn't stop there; He renews their hearts and their faith so that they get back to doing His will. Twice God says, ***"Consider your ways"*** as to remind them that they are not considering His ways...the only way to peace and satisfaction as much as can be found in this life...through Him. To use a modern day phrase... ***"How's that working for you?" "How is what you are doing working for you especially since I am the reason that you are just barely making it."*** ***"Only I can fix this and because you are my own, I will!"*** Then they repent and turn and do as God has directed...at least for a little while. He will have to remind them again...and He does, because He loves His own that much to not let them be stuck and not moving forward.

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
February 10, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review- Haggai 1:1-11

1. The prophet

- a. **He was one of the older prophets...perhaps in his 80's or 90's since he seems to remember the original temple. Haggai 2:3**
- b. **His name means "festal" which may indicate ...as many have speculated...that he was born during one of the pilgrimage feast- Unleavened Bread, Pentecost or Feast of Weeks or feast of tabernacles/Tents.**
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2. His message

- a. **In short...the people were being disobedient at this time.**
- b. **He calls upon God's people to *"give careful thought" "Consider your ways"...*something we all must do before making decisions.**
- c. **They were more concerned with their own prosperity than they were with carrying out God's expressed will...rebuilding His temple.**

3. What was God's main beef with these people?

- a. **The leaders only did what was necessary to fulfill their role of governor and priest.**
- b. **And the people were disobedient to His expressed will of rebuilding the Temple.- Vs. 2- *"These people (your people, my people, that you lead), say the time is not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord."***
- c. **Even though God had expressly sent them there to do just that...and now after some confusion they have the king's blessing and decree directing them to do so.**

4. Generally speaking what is the basic problem of these folks? And how and why do we exhibit the same thing today?

- a. **NO TRUST in GOD to do as He says He will do...**
- b. **Even though He has just returned them...delivered them from exile...just as He said He would.**
- c. **But what did they encounter when they got back...hardship. There is so much to do. God brought them back here to this? All the rubble certainly represents their own lives and He needs them to focus on God and His will. They have to re-learn this but it will reap great benefit...to trust and obey.**

C. Haggai 1:12-15

1. What is the response of the remnant to Haggai's message from verses 1-11?
  - a. **The leadership and the remnant recognized God's Word through the voice of the prophet.**
  - b. **And that the LORD had sent the prophet to them for this main point.**
  - c. **He didn't leave them in their sin...just like the prodigal son...God brought them to their senses...their Christian senses.**
  - d. **They all turned and obeyed.**
  - e. **And they feared the LORD! They were willing to live as He prescribes...to do as He commands...to reflect Him in all their lives. A complete reversal of how they had been living.**
2. Why do the people respond the way they do? Why a change of heart?
  - a. **God through His prophet had called them to repent and begin to act as they had said they would.**
  - b. **It had been harder than they expected when they got back...so they did what came natural and took care of themselves...but God reminded His children how they should live and they responded accordingly.**
  - c. **These were believers and the Word moved them to repent...the only thing that really can. So God's Word moved them to a change of heart...the power of the gospel.**
3. What was the LORD's response to the people?
  - a. **He said, "I am with you."** Why would this response from the LORD be especially important to these people?
    - (1)**The Immanuel principle was extremely important to them.**
    - (2)**It reinforced God's covenant with them.**
    - (3)**God's presence enlivened them.**
    - (4)**They had "felt" like God had abandoned them.**
  - b. **He stirred their spirits...**
    - (1)**God Himself brought about the response from His people that He wanted.**
    - (2)**God's Word worked through the 'spirits' of His people to restore and renew them.**
    - (3)**3 times the text says God stirred up the spirit...of the leader, the priest and the people...in order to achieve His sovereign purposes. God's will...will be done.**
    - (4)**God renews His people to be productive for the kingdom once again..."revival" works that way...It is not called down by God's people ... God brings revival on whomever He chooses...whenever He chooses.**

D. Haggai 2:1-9

1. Approximately how long after they began does Haggai's Second message from the LORD come? And why?
  - a. **Only about 4 weeks later.**

- b. They had begun to feel overwhelmed with the task at hand...
          - (1) maybe even realizing that this Temple would not be as “good” as the first Temple.
          - (2) People start projects with great energy and maybe even zeal but then the project seems to drag on “too long” and that zeal/energy/desire wanes.
  - 2. How do we see God’s grace in these verses toward His people?
    - a. He sends yet another word to stir them towards the work at hand. “Pep talks are good!”
    - b. Haggai who was probably the only person there who had seen the original Temple basically said to them from the LORD that they shouldn’t dwell on things they can’t control.
    - c. Just like God had said to Joshua...He says, “*Be strong...I am with you*”... reassuring these weak believers that He is there and He will “reside” in their Temple as long as they do as He says.
    - d. Here is a 3fold “*Be strong*” – vs. 4
      - (1) Repetition was normal in Hebrew writing for emphasis.
        - To repeat something 2 times was to really emphasize something...it was of primary importance. Jesus often said “*Truly, truly, I say to you...*” meaning that what He was saying was absolutely true...no questions.
        - But 3 times, as we have said before, makes this ultimately important...life changing important emphasizing for them what they need to ultimately focus on...and this word is final!
      - (2) Not what they think they cannot do...but what they can do in the strength of the Lord just like when He commanded them with Solomon’s Temple.
      - (3) This seems to be in contrast to “*Consider your ways*”... Be strong in my way...Work, and I am with you....according to the covenant I made with you when you came out of Egypt.” (Not with them specifically but with them as a people ...and God does not go back on His promises.
    - e. He has delivered them as He had done in Egypt...so even without the Temple He is with them...had he not sent a prophet to speak with His people.
    - f. His Spirit is with them as the proof of His covenant to be with them so they do not have to Fear.
  - 3. What is He talking about in verses 6-9?
    - a. Just like all the prophets...near events...downfall of Persia...downfall of Rome...etc.
    - b. The Last Day...just like in Joel.
    - c. Fear not...all things will happen just as I say...so...Be strong and fear not
- E. Haggai 2:10-19
1. How is this 3rd message similar to the first message?
    - a. The people were not living rightly.

- b. **They were working for duty sake...they had not yet learned to work for the LORD for His glory. They were not working as a result of faith they were still doing this to receive God's favor...something God had said he had already given them.**
- c. **The first message was given in Aug/Sept. the second message was given in Sept./October, this message is given in Dec 24<sup>th</sup> ..give or take a day either way....and they have apparently not learned yet why they are doing what they are doing...or let's say they are still learning...new normal for them.**
- d. **Instead of "*Consider your ways...*" he says, "*consider from this day onward...*"**
  - (1) **In both cases He is calling them to repent and change directions away from pleasing themselves...making accommodations for what they want...**
  - (2) **To living by God's commands and God promises from this day forward and He will bless them from this day forward.**
  - (3) **In fact, He is so convince they will do as He says that the words used are a promise that this will be accomplished...**
  - (4) **God doesn't have to wait to see if they will actually do...since His blessings have never been based on our actions. He can always discipline them if and when He needs to without taking away His blessings.**

2. How is it different from the first one?

F. Haggai 2:20-23- 4<sup>th</sup> Message 2<sup>nd</sup> on the same day Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>.

- 1. What is being prefigured here in this text?
  - a. **The Last Day...when all the nations will be undone.**
  - b. **Zerubbabel is shown throughout but especially here as a significant figure in the line of David.**
  - c. **He is one with the authority of God by nature of the "signet ring" illusion. This reveals that he is valuable, as one who wears the king's signet ring does everything in his name so you would have to be chosen from among all the king's trusted men.**
  - d. **He had been given the task to rebuild the Temple that would one day welcome Jesus... the true signet ring bearer that Zerubbabel points to.**
  - e. **Zerubbabel is a type for Christ as ruler...God's chosen ruler...he cannot be King because of the curse on Jeconiah/ Jehoiakim ending the rule of the Davidic line until Christ the true King the One whom is destined to wear the King's ring comes.**
- 2. Where do we see Zerubbabel highlighted in the NT? **Matt. 1:12-13, Luke 3:27**
- 3. What lesson (s) do we learn from these last passages from the prophet Haggai?

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
February 24, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review

5. What was God's main beef with these people?
  - d. The leaders only did what was necessary to fulfill their role of governor and priest.**
  - e. And the people were disobedient to His expressed will of rebuilding the Temple.- Vs. 2- *"These people (your people, my people, that you lead), say the time is not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord."***
  - f. Even though God had expressly sent them their to do just that...and now after some confusion they have the kings blessing and decree directing them to do so.**
6. What lesson(s) do we learn from these last passages from the prophet Haggai?
7. Just a side note: Why the change from BC/AD to BCE/CE?
  - a. BCE= Before the Common/Current Era. CE= Common/Current Era**
  - b. BC= Before Christ. AD= Anno Domini- In the year of our Lord.**
  - c. Most common reason for this change is to avoid any reference to Christianity.**

C. Zechariah

1. Introduction to the book:
  - a. According to these verses who wrote this book?**
    - (1)Zechariah, son of Berechiah ("Yahweh blesses"), son of Iddo("The appointed time")**
      - He was the son of a priest...through the line of Iddo- Neh. 12:4**
      - But he was called to be a prophet as we see him in this role...receiving oracles and visions to be communicated to God's people.**
      - We will see he will receive 9 visions (including this oracle, in all) from Oct./Nov/ 520 BC... again in Feb. 519 BC...4 more in Dec. 518 BC...and then last ones in chapters 9-14 sometime in the 480's or 470's BC**
    - (2)He is writing at the same time as Haggai...at least this first oracle...which was written Oct./Nov. of 520 right after the people began to work on the Temple again.**
    - (3)According to 2:4 he was a young man in comparison with Haggai to be sure...but Jewish tradition has him living up to the reign of Xerxes I- (485-465 BC.) Queen Esther's time frame.**
  - b. A couple of other facts about this book.**
    - (1)It is said to have the clearest and largest number of Messianic prophecies among the Minor Prophets**
    - (2)The theme of this whole book even including verses 1-6 can be found in the meaning of his name. Zechariah= "Yahweh remembers" and this book has many passages of hope that God would remember His promises to His people. His whole name would be Yahweh remembers and blesses at the appointed time.**

2. Zechariah 1:1-6- his oracle. What is his message to these people?
  - a. **Don't be like their forefathers who did evil until that evil had been pointed out.**
    - (1) **He didn't have to give specific sins as Haggai did...the evil ways of their fathers explained it all. The same sins that are 3 common in every generation...complacency, pride, lack of contentment in God's provision...to name 3.**
    - (2) **The word "overtake" in verse 6 is like a patrol car in pursuit of a suspect that eventually overtakes them and pulls them over to make an arrest. The Word of God arrests us when we are convicted of our sin.**
    - (3) **The judgment that was threaten fell upon them...overtook them and they had to repent just as God had planned... *"As the LORD of Hosts purposed to deal with us..."***
  - b. **This is a call to repentance right after they had begun work on the temple after Haggai had gotten a hold of them because of their lack of obedience...and their blindness in not understanding why things were the way they were.**
  - c. **A double whammy if you will...they had just repented after Haggai's scathing prophesy in August/Sept. and now they are getting another one.**
  - d. **But that is the way of these prophet both of them begin with an oracle calling upon the people to repent or to once again felt God's wrath.**
  - e. **But it is not all about judgment, though that may have been all they heard. What is the blessing in this passage?**
    - (1) **God promises mercy just as certainly as He promises His wrath. By letting them know what they were guilty of they could repent.**
    - (2) **God stands clean to wash clean the sins of His people and we can experience that as we submit to Him- *"Return to me, says the LORD of Hosts and I will return to you."* See James 4:8- *"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."* Again this is covenantal language letting them know how God sees His people.**
3. Zechariah 2:7-17- the first night time vision of the 4 horsemen and the myrtle trees. What is going on here?
  - a. **"Myrtle trees"- James Montgomery Boice observes, *"Israel is not likened to a cedar of Lebanon, which is majestic, or an oak tree, which is strong. Having blossoms that emit a sweet fragrance when crushed, the myrtle illustrates the grace toward Israel as God chastises them."***
  - b. **See Isaiah 63:1-6-The LORD or the Lord's Avenging/ Destroying Angel.**
  - c. **The Rider on the red horse standing among the myrtle trees in the glen- mott = darkness. Just like in the motts in South Texas very little light gets into them for the trees are so thick. So there is a certain mystery of who this is, though the persons existence doesn't seem to bother the prophet.**
  - d. **The purpose of this vision is to let the people know that God is with them and His angels/agents have been watching over them bringing them to this point.**
    - (1) **They were never alone even though they felt like it...**
    - (2) **Vs. 11-12- The angel of the LORD is Christ incarnate...a theophany. The man of verse 10.**

- (3) These colors don't necessarily go along with the horse of revelation 6 mainly because these seem to be observers not messengers of judgment.**
- e. **The LORD is getting ready to pour out His wrath on His enemies as His house is built.**
- f. **The Lord is preparing to bless His people yet again...for He is exceedingly jealous... which expresses His...**
- (1) Marital love and affection for His Bride...no one else can have her.**
- (2) His zeal for their/our good.**
- (3) And his indignation and vengeance He will render upon His enemies.**
- g. **4 years or so after this prophecy the temple will be rebuilt and the sense of prosperity and comfort will return for a while.**
- (1) The house of the LORD will be rebuilt bringing back what many in Israel call the remembrance of "better days" in the past.**
- (2) The looking forward to "better days" with His presence restored...from their perspective. Looking forward to the day that the LORD will once again dwell in the Temple and reign...The Messianic Reign from their perspective.**
- (3) But Christ...the Messiah has come, His glory filled the temple for a short period of time...then He was put to death, rose again and reigns at the right hand of the Father in heaven**
- (4) This seems to be looking forward to the 2nd coming—Rev. 21.**
- **Jerusalem is the Church and God is within her dwelling with her**
  - **There is no Temple there for there will be no need.**
- h. **What is the significance of the title "The LORD of Hosts" in this setting?**
- (1) This particular title is used 8 times in 17 verses to denote:**
- **God's absolute sovereignty.**
  - **God's absolute control a military term in a sense but it goes way beyond that.**
- (2) 9-10 times we have the LORD or the Angel of the LORD= Yahweh.**
- (3) With all of these it is clear who is the central character in this narrative/prophecy...apocalyptic literature.**
4. **Zechariah 1:18-21- which seems to be the beginning of chapter 2 in the Hebrew text.**
- a. **What is going on here?**
- (1) 4 horns might be the same as the powers in Daniel 8.**
- **A Ram with 2 horns= Medo-Persian power**
  - **A goat with a single horn= Greece- Alexander the Great then Alexander dies and**
  - **Four horns replace the one representing the 4 kingdoms that come out of Alexander's rule**
  - **Then there was only the "little horn"= Antiochus Epiphanes IV**
  - **But they could also represent Babylon and Rome...**
  - **Obviously they represent enemies that scatter God's children because of God's wrath against His children...scatter in the way a bull scatters the ground with His horns.**



**(2) 4 Craftsmen or carpenters or smiths...these were empowered by God to cut off the horns.**

- **These were “professionals”...they had been taught trained and apprenticed for their jobs. So they were more qualified than anyone else.**
- **God always raises up “able” men who have been prepared and equipped to protect, to preserve and to compel the church to action. To stand in the gap between God and his people...priests, Levites, then apostles, now elders.**

b. What is significant for us today?

5. Zechariah 2- What is this vision about in this chapter?

a. **Measuring and building the city.**

**(1) The actual Temple and the city rebuilt**

**(2) His Church in the last days.**

b. **“without walls”- Zechariah is seeing a time where there will be no fear of any enemies...and it will be the center of all worship...in the new earth.**

c. **“A wall or pillar of fire”- God always preserves His people. The first wall of pillar protected against Egypt and proved them with comfort in the fact that God was there even by night...so what is the purpose of this wall of fire?**

**(1) From the enemies surrounding them.**

**(2) Keep out God's enemies- Rev. 21:27- “But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.”**

d. **“I will be the glory in her midst.”- Rev. 21:23-26- “...or the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.”**

e. **God calls His people back to Him from Exile...But who else does he draw in as well? Vs. 11 ...Always interests me how the Jews did not see these references to the Gentiles being brought in their prophets.**

f. What do you suppose verse 13 is talking about?

g. What is significant about it for us today?

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
March 3, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. How would you sum up chapters 1 and 2? What is the prophet seeking to communicate to these returnees at this junction in time?
2. What else is alluded to in these 2 chapters and why?

C. Zechariah 3- the 4<sup>th</sup> vision

1. What is Satan accusing Joshua and God of here in this first verse?
  - a. **Satan is accusing Joshua and the priesthood of being unfit to serve the LORD and His people. The Lord Himself stands accused by Satan by virtue that He chose these men.**
  - b. **Accusation that we are unclean...not good enough...that God is not really with us because of our sins...is a favorite lie of Satan to the believer...because if he can get us doubting then half his battle is over and our witness is shot.**
2. In this vision what was Satan's first mistake?
  - a. **The LORD is there.**
  - b. **He chooses to accuse Joshua in front of Him.**
  - c. **Satan exposes his strategy...to oppose God's chosen leaders at every turn even in God's court....like he did Job.**
3. What is God showing the prophet in the vision of Joshua the high priest in these verses?
  - a. **See Ezra 3:2 for this Joshua. 2<sup>nd</sup> Joshua God has used in re-settling His people.**
  - b. **Joshua is not perfect but he is being perfected... "a brand plucked from the fire"...and given "new clothes/garments"**
    - (1) **Joshua was chosen from all the men in the Babylonian captivity and called and commissioned by God as High priest.**
      - **He and the other priest must walk in God's ways...unlike many of the priest before the exile.**
      - **He and the other priest are to keep His charge...His people and their duties acknowledging God's overall commands and direction.**
    - (2) **All believers are plucked out of the fire otherwise we would go down to everlasting condemnation.**
    - (3) **Such NT language with the new clothes- Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:5-14- New clothing is an image of right standing with the Lord.**
  - c. **Satan is check mated by God's greater authority in plucking Joshua out of sin and misery and giving him the righteousness of Christ...his new clothes.**
  - d. **Play on words here... "Behold"= actually is the Hebrew word meaning "sun rise"...or even great ...the part of the heavens to the sun rises...the east." So this further confirming this is the LORD speaking... "Sun of Righteousness..."**

- e. **God is showing the prophet and us what He does with all His children. He removes the *“soiled garments...filthy garments”* and puts us on His royal robes...which looks back to the skins He placed on Adam and Eve and forward to our resurrected bodies.**
  - f. **They...Joshua and the other priests are a sign...if they are obedient...looking forward to the Branch, *“I will bring my servant the Branch.”*...Jesus who will come as the true High Priest.**
    - (1) **See Is. 4:2- *“In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel.”***
    - (2) **See Is. 11:1- *“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.”***
4. In verse 9 the Lord of host says, *“I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.”* What Day is He talking about.
- a. **The Day of Atonement would probably be the first thing that came to his mind as a priest...**
  - b. **Good Friday ...a single day...Christ did away with all the iniquity of all His people...so that Satan can't really accuse us anymore.**
  - c. **And of course, the last Day, in the twinkling of an eye He will make all things new and there will be complete peace and prosperity in His new kingdom. *“...The vine and fig tree...”* that us and our believing neighbors can lounge under.**
  - d. **This whole book so far is filled with great theology –It is God who chooses His children...His leaders...God's election stands firm no matter what Satan tempts us with.**
- D. Zechariah 4- the 5<sup>th</sup> vision
1. This night vision is obviously, in the middle of some pretty good REM sleep, for the angel had to physically shake him awake. As he is shaking himself awake the angel asks him what does he see? So, what does he see and why is it significant to this visions?
- a. **A lampstand of gold- Ex. 25:31-37- *“You shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand shall be made of hammered work: its base, its stem, its cups, its calyxes, and its flowers shall be of one piece with it. And there shall be six branches going out of its sides, three branches of the lampstand out of one side of it and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side of it; three cups made like almond blossoms, each with calyx and flower, on one branch, and three cups made like almond blossoms, each with calyx and flower, on the other branch—so for the six branches going out of the lampstand. And on the lampstand itself there shall be four cups made like almond blossoms, with their calyxes and flowers, and a calyx of one piece with it under each pair of the six branches going out from the lampstand. Their calyxes and their branches shall be of one piece with it, the whole of it a single piece of hammered work of pure gold. You shall make seven lamps for it. And the lamps shall be set up so as to give light on the space in front of it.”*; Rev. 1:12-13- *“Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man...”***

- b. **The difference is that this lampstand was not made by human hands ...and as such it represents the elect in Christ as we are lights for the world...from before the foundations of the world.**
  - 2. But Zechariah is not concerned with the lampstand so he asks a different question to which the LORD doesn't answer right away. Vs 4, 11 and 12. Why is this so significant to him?
    - a. **They are not with the description of the lampstand for the Temple.**
    - b. **God doesn't answer Zechariah's question until verse 14.**
    - c. **Instead, just as God plucked out Joshua, the high Priest he had also plucked out Zerubbabel and commissioned him with these words, "Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit you shall become a plain..."**
  - 3. So what is this vision about? (It could be about more than one thing but it is assuredly about a particular thing.)
    - a. **Zerubbabel is the other olive tree/branch after Joshua to lead God's people to fulfill their calling.**
    - b. **Nothing of any worth is accomplished without the Spirit of God whom God gives to those He has chosen to do His will and work.**
    - c. **Side note: The first couple of times it is about the 2 olive trees, then the third time he enquires it is about 2 branches on the olive trees... Joshua and Zerubbabel represent the Branch as priest and king...Jesus is the 2 trees for He is the true Priest and King.**
- E. Zechariah 5- the 6<sup>th</sup> vision
- 1. How did God describe the significance of the flying scroll in verses 1-2?
    - a. **This is a curse...because of the sins of men.**
    - b. **The size of the scroll is the same size as the vestibule of the temple.**
      - (1) **See I King 6:3- "The vestibule in front of the nave of the house was twenty cubits long, equal to the width of the house, and ten cubits deep in front of the house." This is a room that is basically 30' by 15' in size= 450 sq.ft.**
      - (2) **This is a big curse and a big book...in fact, Jewish tradition teaches that this is the book of the Sins of Man. Serious nature of judgment.**
  - 2. What message does God want to get across here in verses 1-4?
    - a. **That the God who restores is also the God who will ultimately deal with evil.**
    - b. **He will hold His people and all who are wicked accountable for these sins.**
    - c. **Why do you suppose He points out the two sins...stealing and swearing falsely...taking the LORD's name in vain.**
      - (1) **Swearing falsely breaks the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment and stands for the first tablet of the Law.**
      - (2) **Stealing is the breaking of the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment and stands for the 2<sup>nd</sup> tablet of the Law...so those who openly defy God and His Word will be dealt with.**

**(3) Vs. 4 speaks of the complete consequences of their sin... All things will ultimately burn up.**

- **Deut. 32:21-22- “They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.”**
- **II Peter 3:10-13- “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”**

3. What is God communication in the 7<sup>th</sup> vision of the woman in the measuring basket in verses 5-11?
  - a. **Instead of a really big porch representing man’s sins...now we have a basket the size of an ephah...the largest dry measurement in Israel at the time....which equals 39 American quarts.**
  - b. **God is removing from His people wickedness and sin...finally and completely...**
  - c. **The sin...WICKEDNESS...is removed to Shiner/ Babylon**
    - (1)**Shinar is the land from Gen. 11 where the Tower of Babel was built in opposition to God and His Word.**
    - (2)**The place Revelation calls the pit of fire...the abyss.**
  - d. **Just as an aside: woman –wickedness, is because first of all “wickedness’ in Hebrew is a feminine word...and secondly because most of Israel’s idols were characterized as prostitutes. Solomon uses this imagery in Proverbs of the wicked women...but there “wisdom is also pictured as a wise and godly woman...they are both feminine words in nature.**
  - e. **So sin will be removed and along with the principle of the temptation to sin...Satan and our fallenness will be finally dealt with by Christ.**

**F. Zechariah 6- the 8<sup>th</sup> Vision**

1. What is being communicated here in this vision in verses 1-8?
  - a. **God’s providence moves swiftly and powerful like chariots drawn by the strongest horses...and His providence is directed by His wisdom, which has been around since before creation, and His sovereign will.**
  - b. **God’s providence and His wisdom are the 2 mountains suggested here.**
  - c. **Many have suggested with all the temple imagery that these 2 “mountains” are the bronze pillars of the Temple which these chariots come out of to do God’s will in all the earth.**
  - d. **The 4chariots like the four winds=spirits...cover the whole earth again making it clear that God and his emissaries are**

**everywhere...God's people are never alone...and God's emissaries are always working out God's will- *"Go throughout the earth."* *"Go patrol the earth."***

- e. The black horses go north where Israel enemies have come from...to subdue ...bring judgement and once that is done then there is peace in the south.**
  - f. The white horse go with the black to be deliverance for those who are God's in the north...no one is left behind.**
2. What is the significance for us today?

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
March 17, 2021

G. Prayer

H. Review

3. What is God communicating through the prophet in chapters 3- 6:1-8?
  - a. **8 visions spoke of the restoration of God's people and the judgement on those who aren't.**
  - b.
4. What lessons do we learn from these visions?
  - a. **That God is always here.**
  - b. **Always with His children watching over us.**
  - c. **His plan/providence will completely succeed.**

I. Zechariah 6:9-15

1. What specific event do we see occurring here in verses 9-11? And what does that mean?
  - a. **Zechariah is to make a crown for Joshua from gold and silver taken from Babylon.**
  - b. **Interesting, priest did now wear crowns. The high priest wore a turban.**
  - c. **Since Joshua is a type of Christ...God through Zechariah is foreshadowing again one who would be priest and king.**
2. What specially is being prophesied in vs. 12-15?
  - a. **We see another fairly clear prophecy concerning the Messiah again in vs. 12... "*Behold the man...*" is very reminiscent of the exact word Pilate will use when he presents the beaten Christ to the crowd and says, "*Ecco homo*"**
  - b. **This man that is coming is the Branch...the Messiah...and He will branch out...grow the Church...the Temple of the LORD.**
  - c. **He will rule on his/His throne...David's throne -think Is. 9:6-7...and Christ's throne in the New Heavens and New Earth.**
  - d. **And He shall sit and rule on His throne and there will be peace...Is. 9...peace between God and His elect sinners...who are from every nation tongue and tribe- verse 15.**
  - e. Extra: What is being communicated in verse 14?
    - (1)**It is placed in a place of prominence after Joshua dies as a reminder to the people of the generosity of these men...**
    - (2)**Also to remind the people how God uses us as means when we submit to His will.**
    - (3)**Also, to remind them to be looking forward to the Return of the King when He will acquire His crown.**

J. Zechariah 7- about 2 years have transpired since the visions had been received. The temple was now about half way complete.

1. What is going on in this chapter? What problems do you see with these folks?
  - a. **Interesting, the people of Bethel came inquiring about 2 fasts that they held in remembrance of the destruction of the temple.**

- b. **The Law of Moses only allowed for one fast a year for the congregation of God's people... on the Day of Atonement.**
  - c. **But the people went ahead and modified that requirement thinking if one is good and not even the whole day then multiple fasts would be better...at least 4 more "national" fasts occurred while in exile. And as with all other religious ceremonies not sanctioned by the Lord the people began to misuse them and they became simple formalism. The 4 fasts that the people instituted in Exile:**
    - (1) **4<sup>th</sup> month= June- a fast –a time of humiliation and mourning- mourning the breaking of the walls of Jerusalem**
    - (2) **5<sup>th</sup> Month= July- a fast mourning the burning of the temple.**
    - (3) **7<sup>th</sup> month- Sept.- a fast- mourning the killing of Gedaliah**
    - (4) **10<sup>th</sup> Month – December- mourning the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem.**
  - d. **Vs. 3 sort of supports this arrogance in formalism. At the end of verses 3 we see a phrase.. *"as I have done for so many years."* This apparently is a "boast" in the Hebrew...look at me I am doing my duty.**
    - (1) **Boasting before the LORD while at the same time seeking His favor (vs. 2)...not good!**
    - (2) **Boasting before the LORD concerning your duty is never a good thing...history told them that.**
    - (3) **Devising their own forms or worship is a boast that says, as men we know best....which is never a good thing.**
2. **How does God respond to these people?**
- a. **He reproofs their ritualism 7:4-10...these were not sanctioned fasts....and as such were merely fasting, eating and drinking for themselves (vs. 6) not in obedience to the LORD (vs. 5).**
  - b. **Ge reproofs them for not caring for the least among them...if their religious practices had been true then they would have done what God had commanded as far as taking care of those less fortunate than themselves...for that is what family does. For one another. (Vs. 9-10)**
  - c. **Think of the trouble Paul had with the Corinthians concerning the Lord's Supper.**
    - (1) **He had warned their forefathers but they would not listen and so they had to be dealt with accordingly... vs. 11-14. Would not listen is kind of an understatement.**
      - ***Zechariah vs. 11 says, "But they refused to pay attention and turned their stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear."***
      - ***Zechariah says in vs 12. - "They made their own hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets."***
      - ***So they set their will...their heart and their body against the LORD. "...refused to pay attention...turned their stubborn shoulder...stopped up their own ears...made they own hearts diamond hard...lest they should heard the law."***
    - (2) **So again don't be like your forefathers!**



Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
March 24, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What were some of the Messianic prophecies that we saw in in chapters 6:9-15 through 8:8?
2. What were some of the initial issues with the requests concerning fasting by the people from Bethel?

C. Zechariah 8- He is still talking to the people because of the question brought up by the folks from Bethel.

1. What are verses 1-8 communicating to them?
  - a. **God promises again future blessing on Jerusalem.**
  - b. **Which told them that God would once again bless them as a people.**
  - c. **While the people take this as a sign of hope it is definitely pointing to the day Christ returns for there are some things that just won't happen until then.**
  - d. **It is one of the reasons for the Jews today still holding out that the Messiah/ King will come and re-establish the throne along with the sacrifices and rule from Jerusalem.**
  - e. **By His re-establishment of the covenant renewal in verses 7-8 they would take that as a sign that they are covered motivating them to finish the Temple so they can begin to reap some of these benefits.**
2. Their question had been about the appropriateness of on-going fasts, so what does this 3<sup>rd</sup> answer in verses 9-13 mean?
  - a. **He begins and end this section with *"...let your hands be strong"*. Our worship is in both word and deed. *"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do to the glory of God."* We are to have a heart of obedience that will define our heart of worship.**
  - b. **They had asked about fasting...what should they have been devoted to... to be the people that God had called them to be? Building the temple!**
  - c. **So as the people fulfill their calling there will be a sowing of peace and renewal...they will be able to experience their earthly inheritance as children of God.**
  - d. **And one day we will not ever again be a by-word among the nations...but the name child of God will rise to its promised position in the New Heavens and the New Earth.**
3. Now in verses 14-19, he finally addresses the subject of their inquiry specifically. What does He say? Did something change?
  - a. **He says that He is choosing to come and bless them and they are choosing to be obedient...not like their fathers.**
  - b. **The people are called upon to order their lives according to the standard that God had established for His people towards one another and because He "hates" lying, devising evil, injustice, false oaths towards one another.**

- c. **If they will follow the covenant standards for His people they should not do just the 2 fasts they were asking about but all of them that were started while in Exile turning them from fasts to feasts as a joy and as a celebration for all the people...since their hearts had been changed and the promise of the Messiah was so real.**
  - d. **When would this happen?**
    - (1) They jumped on the fact that God sanctioned these fast/feasts from that time forward.**
    - (2) In fact, they are still doing these in Jerusalem because as far as they are concerned the Messiah has not yet come and made these fasts, days of joy and gladness...cheerful feasts. For they can only be joyful when the Messiah comes and re-establishes His rule on this earth.**
    - (3) This prophecy really does not have to do with a restored national Israel...but the consummation after Christ has come the second time when the true Israel of God comes together.**
      - **For if this was a restored Israel like in the millennial age (Historic Pre-mil or Dispensational Pre-Mil) ...then all the sacrifices would be needed as well...and Jesus Christ the true Messiah has done away with the need ever again for sacrifices or these separate feast days since everyday will be the joy and gladness talked about.**
      - **And the feasts and the feasts of Israel pretty much disappeared within Christianity from very close to the beginning replaced by the Lord's Supper and Baptism as means of grace along with on-going repentance before the Lord. There are no general fasts referred to or prescribed anywhere in the New Testament.**
4. Zechariah 8:20-23 -What is this section of Scripture highlighting?
- a. **Interestingly, this last section maybe a response to the call...the command in Chapter 2:6-7- The ESV says, *"Up! Up! Flee from the land of the north...Up! Escape to Zion, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon."* Or it could be clearly stated, *"Come! Come! Flee...Come! Escape to Zion"***
    - (1) The promise is for the elect in Israel and the elect within the Gentiles.**
    - (2) They were beckoned to come and here in these last verses of Chapter 8 there is a picture of their coming... *"Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD and seek the LORD of Hosts...Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."***
    - (3) Happy is the one who is among those who hear the call and go with Jesus.**
  - b. **It is a picture of the growth of God's Church ...the true Israel of God...from every nation, tongue and tribe...**
    - (1) Rev. 5:9-10- *"Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."***

- (2) **Rev. 7:9-10- *"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'"***
- (3) **Look at vs. 23- Think of how many times someone touched Jesus' (an ethnic Jew) robe during His ministry... In fact, it is a likelihood that Jesus is the JEW spoken of here. But He may simply be One among many!**
- (4) **On the Day of Pentecost-**
- **Literally thousands of Jews and proselytes to Judaism along with many Gentiles became Christians that day because of the Word of the Lord spoken through another ethnic Jew.**
  - **After Peter preached they asked, *"What can I do to be saved?"* here they are saying *"Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."***
- (5) **Throughout the book of Acts we see thousands of people coming to the Lord through the work of ethnic Jews who were believers in the Lord Jesus Christ...they were all, like all the elect are, the true children of the promise...of the Covenant.**
- (6) **Throughout time there have been revivals and movements where God's Word has attracted hundreds and hundreds of hearts to the Lord.**
- (7) **The life and deaths of individual Christians have seen hundreds, thousands millions and billions brought into the kingdom by God whether that is through covenant births of covenant children or the martyrs whose life and death inspire many who are drawn to God because of their sacrifice and testimony for God and for people..**
- c. **It is also a picture of the church at the end...Rev. 21-24-26- *"By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations."***
5. **How is any of this significant for our day to day?**
- a. **Every day, without exception, we need to be reminded of where history is headed. We are forgetful and too easily influenced by the flash of the next thing.**
  - b. **All of what we have looked at but maybe the last few verses for sure is the headline for this evening that we need to hold onto....because history is all about His commitment to redeem His people from every nation, tongue and tribe and then to make all things new...in a New Heavens and a New Earth.**
  - c. **This isn't a possibility or even a probability but it is a covenantal certainty.**
  - d. **Not only is there a day coming where there will be no need for fasts there is a day and now is and is yet to be fulfilled where we will be leap for joy and gladness and feast cheerfully without fear or doubt.**

D. Zechariah 9:1-8

1. What specifically is an “oracle” again?
  - a. **It is almost always a word of judgment by God against an enemy of His.**
  - b. **This begins God’s message concerning judgement which will continue through Chapter 11.**
  - c. **Oracle=Burden in the Hebrew... every word of the Lord is burdensome or weighty for the one carrying it and delivering it. There is such depth and substance to it that it is extremely weighty for those who are called upon to proclaim it and for those who are and can hear it.**
  - d. **And it is a “dead weight” for those who the coming judgment is for.**
2. Who are the main “players” in this opening to this oracle?
  - a. **God who will bring the judgment.**
    - (1)**He portrays the conquering warrior who will deal all who are in His way of reclaiming the land.**
    - (2)**He is seen as coming from the north and going to Jerusalem**
  - b. **Hadrach, Hamath (Syrian-Antioch), Damascus, cities in Syria, the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon, Philistine cities of Ashkelon, Ekron, Gaza and Ashdod.**
    - (1)**Paul would end up preaching the Gospel in Damascus**
    - (2)**The gospel came to all these cities.**
  - c. **Alexander the Great? History seems to indicate that around 333 BC Alexander came through from the North and devastated these cities on his way to conquering Egypt.**
    - (1)**He took all of these cities and planted Greeks in them.... *“a mixed people shall dwell in Ashdod.”* A purposeful way to keep control over an area that was conquered.**
    - (2)**This could also be translated “a bastards’s people”- referring to the unsubstantiated claim by Alexander’s mother that Alexander was the illegitimate son of the god Jupiter.**
    - (3)**But later Jesus would take these cities with the Gospel as we saw in Zeph. 2 and Obadiah vs 20.**
3. What is in here to encourage God’s people?
  - a. **Vs. 1b- see note on this passage... The Hebrew reads a bit stoically like this – *“When the eyes of men, as of the tribes of Israel, shall be towards God.”* God’s people will look on in faith and see what God is doing.**
  - b. **Vs. 5-8**
    - (1)**God will avenge His people. He will save them utterly even those He is not happy with.**
    - (2)**The prophet says God will once again be with “believing” Israel but also with believing Gentiles among the mixed people... *“...a remnant, a clan like a clan in Judah...”***
    - (3)**While He will bring great wrath- and it is great, (some of the biblical and extra-biblical accounts of the battles and conquering of cities are extremely gruesome) on His enemies...this will be an encouragement to His people that God is doing just as He said He would do.**

4. What are some things we can take with us from here?
- a. **That no one that is God's will be lost. Wherever they are He will draw them to Himself.**
  - b. **In Christ there is no distinction....Jew nor Greek nor rich or poor...we are all one in Him.**
  - c. **And God will once again *"...see with His own eyes"* that things are good...very good and pleasing with the Church...His people.**
    - (1) So this points to the work of Christ on the Cross taking away the sins that deserved God's wrath that secured this pleasure just as God had planned.**
    - (2) But this is also, of course, is yet another view of Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming.**

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
March 31, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review

6. Given what all we talked a lot about fasting last time how does this instruct us about fasting today?
  - a. **This whole discussion was a precursor to a time when there will be no more sorrow, sin and need of mourning.**
  - b. **The mandate for specific fasting by the Church or individuals seems to have been lifted because of Jesus' once for all time sacrifice to take upon Himself all the sins...past present and future of His people.**
  - c. **But having said that, even Jesus said "when you fast" so the implication is that there will be times of fasting in the life of the church and the individual Christian. But He gives us clear guidance here in that when we fast on our own...no one is to know about it as if being a spiritual showoff.**
  - d. **But as I said...there is NO specific mandate for fasting given to the Church since Christ...but we are mandated towards on-going repentance...keeping a short list of sins before the Lord...not to make sure we seek His favor...we already have that...but so we can continue experiencing the benefits of our salvation.**
7. As we begin these last 2 oracles (Chapters 9-11 and 12-14) what are some take a ways for us from chapter 9:1-8?
  - d. **That no one that is God's will be lost. Wherever they are He will draw them to Himself.**
  - e. **In Christ there is no distinction...Jew nor Greek nor rich or poor...we are all one in Him.**
  - f. **And God will once again "...see with His own eyes" that things are good...very good and pleasing with the Church...His people.**  
**(3) So this points to the work of Christ on the Cross taking away the sins that deserved God's wrath that secured this pleasure just as God had planned.**  
**(4) But this is also, of course, is yet another view of Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.**

C. Zechariah 9:9-17

1. How and where is the prophecy of vs. 9 fulfilled?
  - a. **In the New Testament at Christ Triumphant entry into Jerusalem.- Palm Sunday we call it.**
  - b. **Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-38; John 12:12-15- as told in the 4 Gospels**
  - c. **At the end of time...the consummation when after He is triumphant over all His enemies and He returns with us who are left alive being caught up together to meet Him in the air. See I Thess. 4:14-18 The words here "to meet Him" speak of greeting our returning Victorious King as He returns and we go together to the great celebration fest of the King over all His enemies.**

2. What promises are made in verses 10-17 and when will they come to pass?
  - a. **The daughters of Zion are rejoicing and shouting aloud because the King/ Bride groom is come and is coming.- This rejoicing is as with every fiber of ones being...triumphant jubilation as when an oppressor was over thrown and all you see in front of you is freedom and joy. Think Star Wars when the Empire fell! Lol!**
  - b. **When Jesus returns there will be no more wars...no more need for weapons. This could also be signaling the final battle.**
  - c. **Speaking peace...looks forward to the first coming of the Prince of Peace but then to the end times when peace is a complete reality as he rules from sea to shining sea...the whole world.**
  - d. **The blood of His covenant speaks to the covering of sin when Christ went to the Cross ...once and for all time. Matt. 26:28- *"...for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."***
  - e. **God will restore to them/us double...He has promised to restore the fortunes of His people.**
    - (1) ***"Grace upon grace"* one grace has left us before another is upon us so the grace is doubled.**
    - (2) **The blood of Christ to take away the sins of His people...and the giving of the Holy Spirit so that we may live the life laid out for us. A double blessing.**
  - f. **Vs. 13 seems to be talking about spreading the Gospel**
    - (1) **Among the Gentiles as well as the children of Israel...Judah and even, Ephraim which equals the 10 tribes will be used by God to spread the Gospel to every nation tongue and tribe. *"Warrior's sword"*= the Word of God in the hands of His apostles/ the church.**
    - (2) **Some have said that this is Maccabean Revolt but that may be a stretch especially given all the good news here causing people to rejoice and be extremely happy...joyous.**
  - g. ***"On that Day..."* vs. 14 and 16**
    - (1) **The trumpets of Revelation...the commander of the Lord's Army-**
    - (2) **Christ- coming in final victory.**
  - h. **For the Messiah, like the long awaited Bride Groom, will be glorious and hard drink and wine will flow in celebration.**

#### D. Zechariah 10

1. What seems to be the main purpose for 10:1-3 especially after all the great stuff He talked about in chapter 9?
  - a. **A rebuke against the practices of His people who have returned.**
  - b. **Vs. 1- no need to worship a rain idol...God gives rain as a sign of His covenantal promise to His people. Ask the LORD for rain...not the *"household gods"* or the false shepherds**
  - c. **Vs. 2-He is angry with Judah and their leaders for allowing the people to mess with idols. The Lord provides enough.**
  - d. **Remember these folks and been sent off into Exile because of their idolatry.**
  - e. **God is angry against the *"leaders/ the goats"*- not the greatest of all time kind of goats...but the goats that will be separated from the sheep...false teachers and bad shepherds that encouraged idols.**

2. How would the Messiah bless His people in verses 1-12?
  - a. **He will provide them with rain for their crops and true ministers/shepherds for their growth.**
  - b. **The idols will be purged.**
  - c. **The false shepherds will be dealt with.**
  - d. **He will restore Judah's esteem when the "*cornerstone*" and "*tent peg or nail peg*" comes out from Him- Christ comes the first time.**
  - e. **In that day Judah and Ephraim will be restored in Christ...people from these tribes, not necessarily whole tribes. Rev. 7**
  - f. **None will be lost as He will whistle for them and gather them in like the Good Shepherd draws His sheep to Himself.**
  - g. **This blessing will be for their children as much as it is for them.**

E. Zechariah 11

1. Why is God calling on them through the prophet to such sadness across the land, according to these three verses? (Zechariah 11:1-3)
  - a. **No one will escape God's wrath...for the sin is great.**
    - (1) **God has shown Himself certainly able to deal with His adversaries and the sins of His people.**
    - (2) **God has also shown Himself to be always placing before mankind repentance.**
  - b. **He cries out, "*Open your doors...*". Jerusalem is who most think is being talked about here.**
    - (1) **As time goes on and the people move into the Intertestamental period they will once again move away from the LORD and eventually this will be true because they will refuse to open their doors to the true Messiah.**
    - (2) **Jesus often talks of this rejection of God- Matthew 21:33-46- The parable of the Talents and the subsequent exposition of it... or John 8:19- "*They said to Him therefore, 'Where is your Father?' Jesus answered, 'You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.'*"**
  - c. **Jerusalem will be overrun and the temple will be destroyed- 70 AD. Which means the nation will be destroyed. Israel was a virtual waste land in many ways "owned" by many different people until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century.**
  - d. **The land will once again be opened to invaders...throughout time there will be oppressors.**
  - e. **Their leaders who are false shepherds will be astonished at this turn of events because they will believe themselves to be righteous...think Sadducees and Pharisees.**
2. What role did the prophet play in the life of Israel in these verses? (Zechariah 11:4-14)
  - a. **He is to become the shepherd of a people destined for ruin. Think Isaiah 6 and Jeremiah 1. The Hebrew says, "*Feed the flock of slaughter...*". See also Jeremiah 7:30-32**
  - b. **Those who buy them have even been defined as the leaders of Israel by the Jews themselves.**
  - c. **They talk about how rich they are having foreclosed the houses of widows, by stealing from the Temple by extracting too much money**



**for the sacrifices being sold in the Temple....turning the temple into a den of thieves.**

- d. Vs. 6 seems to be talking of the different factions that fight during the siege of Jerusalem just like at the time of the Babylonian siege so too Rome's siege.**
- e. So Zachariah becomes a type of Christ here ...to feed the flock of slaughter as God commands.**
- (1) The Messiah came to His own but His own knew Him not.**
- (2) By verse 8b he is getting tired and impatient of these people...so much so that he is called to judge them (vs. 11)...breaking both His staffs...think Moses and the first 10 Commandments.**
- (3) He is like Christ and different at the same time:**
- Who on one hand made it clear that there are both sheep who will follow Him and goats who will be separated from Him and the sheep (remember 10:3 and also 11:16)**
  - Who sees the sins of His people... takes them on Himself on the cross to secure our salvation and then intercedes for us throughout our life because of our on-going sin nature.**
  - Their difference is seen in that Zechariah's weakness of impatience and Christ's patience with His people.**
  - Man is weak and unable to change hearts and minds toward God and we get easily frustrated...thankfully God in Christ does not.**
- f. But he did have some success in the LORD... *"...destroyed the 3 shepherds"*= in a month of Sabbaths...a month of Sundays...he was able to expose the false leaders for what they were. These folks were so depraved that he wasn't going to waste any more time or energy on them or the ones who were determined to follow them. This is the people who purposefully didn't and would not follow the Messiah when He came and they will not be among the numbers when he comes again... (Think Rev. 7 and see the tribes listed there and the ones not.)**
- g. The prophet just like Judas was not given what they were worth in either of their messages.**
- (1)The prophet for his work which was not appreciated...and Judas for his incriminating information against Jesus. Matt. 26:14-15- *"Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What will you give me if I deliver Him over to you?' And they paid him thirty pieces of silver."* (See the conclusion and fulfillment of prophesy- Matt. 27:3-10)**
- (2)Both were given "30 pieces of silver". According to Ex. 21:32- *"If the ox gores a slave, male or female, the owner shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned."* Price of a slave...not much at all...a sign of disrespect. Of course, this is a prophecy concerning the rejection of Judas= the rejection of God's people.**
- (3)The potter's field. The potter was a treasurer or some priest or scribed assigned to handle fields of the dead. The word of God, *"Throw it to the potter...could be render throw it for the potter's field."***

3. What were the consequences of rejecting the true Shepherd, in these verses? (Zechariah 11:15-17)
- a. **God's justice will prevail...more of vs. 1-3.**
  - b. **He will raise up yet another to oppress them or at the very least leave them in their squalor...a long line of oppressors and false messiahs before and after Christ's first coming, because they rejected the promised Messiah. Think Rev. 18:3 and 18:7.**
  - c. **God speaks of the false shepherds here that are there now and will be there later...time after Zechariah, the time of Christ and the time after Christ...because their presence and ministry there will be no power to protect themselves and no justice to be had...only darkness in their own land. Rev. 16:10-11 *"The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds."***
4. What are some of the overall take a ways from what we have looked at tonight?
- a. **That Jesus- the Messiah is the one component that makes all of this prophecy make sense to the extent that there will be total and complete rejoicing when this is all accomplished.**
  - b. **Also, it is amazing that while there may be different words associated with different circumstances the message is the same...when your people walk in your name there are many blessings to experience here and now and in the future.**
  - c. **Also, reminds us of the fact that THERE IS A PLAN to all of this and it is being directed by Him to the end.**

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
April 14, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. So what would you say are the take a ways from all this oracles and visions of the whole book of Zechariah for that?
2. What seems to be one of its largest motifs/themes that keep jumping off almost every page? And why would this particular motif be comforting to these people?

C. Malachi

1. Introduction

- a. **He is the next to the last of a long line of OT prophets...for he actually points to John the Baptist as the one who will prepare the way for Christ to come on the scene.**
- b. **As we saw in Zechariah God seemingly is bringing His message of the coming Messiah to a crescendo and this is true here in Malachi as well.**
- c. **Like some of the other Minor Prophets we don't know much about him because as God's "messenger" it is the message that he has been given by God that matters most... not the prophet.**
- d. **Some through the years have said that we don't even know if Malachi was a real person since his name means "messenger"...but we will go under the impression that he is just like the other prophets we have talked about.**
- e. **Messenger plays an important role in this book...he speaks of it in 3 ways concerning 3 particular people or groups of people:**
  - (1) **Mal. 2:7- *"For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts."* Speaking of the faithful priest...then pastor/teacher and then even believers in general as witnesses for the Lord.**
  - (2) **Mal. 3:1a- *"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me."* John the Baptist was the last OT prophet to prepare even more fully the coming of the Messiah than any of the other prophets.**
  - (3) **Mal. 3:1b-2a- *"And the LORD whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, He is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of His coming, and who can stand when He appears?"* This is the LORD, the Messiah. The Angel of the LORD in the OT is the same Messiah of the NT era...the messenger of the covenant.**
- f. **He is surely a 5<sup>th</sup> century prophet probably prophesying during the governorships of Nehemiah for he speaks to the same sins of the people that Ezra speaks to.**
  - (1) **God's people sinfulness in not listening to Him...**
  - (2) **Robbing Him by neglecting the tithe which also is broader as a specific way they were being disobedient...**

- (3) Marrying foreign wives along with their foreign gods...another specific way of disobedience...**
- (4) Of course, there were the evil priests which always seem to be with them.**
- g. WE know that this prophecy is after the temple is built for he refers to the temple...we know that they are being governed...possibly Nehemiah in Mal. 1:8...and we know this as I said because he speaks to many of the same sins that Ezra speaks to.**
- h. He alone adopted an interesting style of 7 questions and answers with his prophecy...where he would ask a question ...then he would give the sarcastic answer the people would give or had given...then he comes back with the answer with the right word at the right time... some of it is actually “funny” when you think about it as Troy has pointed out in his sermons.**

**D. Malachi 1- 2:9**

**1. What are the highlights of Malachi 1:1?**

- a. As an oracle we have an urgent proclamation of:**
  - (1) Judgement because of their sinfulness.**
  - (2) Also this is about restoration of God’s grace in even telling them of God’s love and this coming judgment all along knowing that some at least will turn for the truth is the only remedy for their sin.**
  - (3) This is a weighty message as well containing all of this truth.**
- b. BUT...God says,...the first words out of His mouth are, “I have loved you.”...I have chosen you...you are mine.**
  - (1) This is sort of a perfect tense word... “I have loved you...I do love you...and I will love you.”**
  - (2) Malachi will have a lot of very specific corrections but he begins with this...I have loved you, says the LORD.**
  - (3) This sets the foundation for their obedience in faith for if they love Him they will keep His commands- John 14:15- Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” Their love for Him will be seen in their seeking to live as He commands in faith.**

**2. Now what is going on in vss. 2-5?**

- a. The first Q&A- “How have you loved us?”**
  - (1) God says I have loved you...Malachi responds as they would sarcastically and dishonoring as if they don’t know the answer to the question- “How have you loved us?”**
  - (2) This of course is a question rarely spoken out loud but too often wondered by God’s people in their sinfulness and affliction.**
  - (3) God’s answer- Find assurance in His election...His choice of them.**
    - Look at how I chose you over Esau’s kids...Edom- I have judged them and will judge them to the end...**
    - God’s children have seen and will see the hand of God and know God does as He says.**
    - Jacob God chose...Esau was left unchosen...passed over by God....and that status as a people group will remain unchanged to the end.**

- You gotta love Spurgeon here. One day a member of the church came up to him and said, *"I cannot understand why God should say that He hated Esau"...* to that Spurgeon replied, *"That is not my difficulty. My trouble is to understand how God could love Jacob!"*

(4) This, of course, is the height of arrogance from any people but especially His people.

b. Lest we think too harshly of these folks...

(1) All of this sounds so familiar. We are so spoiled and so wealthy compared to most folks that have gone before us and most people around the world and yet we do not appreciate and give thanks to God for the fullness of His provision for us.

(2) It is sort of like ...how we forget from one birthday or one Christmas to then next forgetting what a loved one has gotten for us...for it lies among the abundance... and in our selfishness we forget and want more.

3. Vss. 6-8 we see two questions. What is going on here?

a. God begins with you easily honor your fathers and your masters...but *Where is my honor? Where is my fear/reverence?*

(1) This is so sad that He would have to ask this of His leaders who despise His name.

(2) They call God Father and they call Him master but they show their earthly fathers and master more honor and respect than they do God... Which is hyperbole...for God knows they distrust and mock their earthly leaders and masters as well...they despise authority of all kinds while at the same time hypocritically placating to them until their backs are turned.

b. They question. *"How do we despise your name?"* and *"How have we polluted/defiled you?"*

(1) By offering defiled/polluted sacrifices...non-blemish free.

(2) They knew God's direct commands and they compromised His law any way they could (What's the loop hole?).... *"By saying that the LORD's table may be despised."*

(3) They asked this in such a way that they seemingly did not know...but they knew. OR...they had been doing it for so long that they didn't remember... so they were "unaware" of the extent of their sin against God.

- Lev. 22:20- *"You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you."*
- Deut. 15:21- *"But if it has any blemish, if it is lame or blind or has any serious blemish whatever, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God."*

(4) But they knew that such an "offering" would not be acceptable to the governor...giving less than the best....why are the willingly giving less to God? This was one of their ways of making money to be made in bribes from the people so they could keep the "first-born" and "blemishless" for breeding purposes? Or did they simply want to keep the best meat for themselves?

- c. **G. Campbell Morgan once said of this text, *"I am more afraid of the profanity of the sanctuary than I am of the profanity of the street."* Anything that adds to or takes away from God's explicit commands is the profanity for which he speaks.**
  - d. **What compromises are we willing to make with our best...with our first-fruit...and why?**
- 4. **Interesting talk in vss. 9-11. What is going on here?**
  - a. **God will be glorified but it won't be by these present people!**
  - b. **Vs. 9 could read- *"Just try to pacify God and win His favor. But how could He show favor to any who willingly compromise themselves in word and deed?"***
  - c. **Vs. 10- Oh that there would be someone who would shut the doors to what you call worship so my wrath wouldn't need to be so great!**
    - (1) Their worship was so compromised and so vain and so corrupt...once again that God didn't want anything to do with it and was willing and able to do away with it which He will at Christ's resurrection when the veil in the Temple is torn from top to bottom.**
    - (2) If only they could have remembered their own prophets so that when Jesus came they would have been found worshipping correctly... then they could have seen the connection between the sacrifice and His sacrifice.**
  - d. **Vs. 11- Yet again...with the Gentiles...Oy Vay! For God will be worshiped by His true people!**
- 5. **What is he saying in verses 12-14?**
  - a. **That even the worshippers are not satisfied...such a "weariness" and a waste of time- "you snort at it"...for what they do and what the priest lead them to do is contemptible...it is vile and an abomination.**
  - b. **He curses the shallow and selfish false worship.**
  - c. **So God flat out curses the priests who bring such offerings as deceivers/cheat...devils...sons of their father Satan...Jesus calls them.**
  - d. **God finishes this by telling us who He is...which communicates what He deserves from us.**
    - (1) We willingly give to others our best.**
    - (2) We do not fear Him...we figure that what we offer is "good enough"...but we forget that God does not settle for good enough...that is why He sent His Son.**
  - e. **3 times in these last verses (11-14) we read, *"For my name will be great...feared...among the nations."* Do you think He is making a point about Himself that they have forgotten...that we all forget too often?**
- 6. **So now what is going on in 2:1-9?**
  - a. **The command to which he refers is the whole message of how they are dishonoring God and His name...**
    - (1) Breaking the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> commandments purposefully...**
    - (2) Not worshipping God as God and not worshipping God as He prescribes.**

**b. He will curse them-**

**(1) Deut. 28:15-20- *"But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God or be careful to do all His commandments and His statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out. The Lord will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration in all that you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and perish quickly on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken me."***

**(2) The above is bad enough but the worst would have been cursing the "blessings"- Numb. 6:24-27- *"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them."***

- God had given the priest the authority to bless the people but now that was taken away so that they are only going through the motions...they are useless. Every time they make that blessing...which was at every service they would heap curses upon themselves because of their unfaithfulness.
- If this blessing...the most important of blessings for the Jew was taken from them...their doom was secured.

**(3) In fact, He has already cursed them.**

- By humiliating them with the dung of the sacrificial animal...the curse was like rubbing the fecal matter on themselves showing everyone how unclean and useless they would become.
- This is a warning to turn or burn...like the dung of the animals outside the city.
- Rebuking their offspring is at the most not allowing for any more succession in the family line to the office...of priest and/or High priest, which would become non-existent after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD....at worst that they would suffer the same humiliation as their fathers.
- They are being judged and will eventually be non-existent. Vs. 4, *"So shall you know that I have sent this command to you, that my covenant with Levi may stand, says, the LORD of Hosts."* These priest from the tribe of Levi will be replaced by the High Priest Jesus Christ and there will not be a need to ever reconstitute this particular office again.

**c. Vs. 5-7- If they had only remained like the Levi of old who "stood in awe of God's name."**

**(1) They taught the Law of God in a trustworthy way...even in their fallen condition...they were still true to their calling.**

**(2) They protected the things and the people of God from their own sins.**

**(3) They upheld the holiness of God...to the point that what came from their lips was what the people needed to hear for life...and they could bless the people with the authority given to them by God the Father so that the people could be assured of God's presence.**

**d. Vs. 8-9- These passages show the contrast between the ideal and reality.**

**(1) Instead of guarding knowledge and the people...they departed from God's way and set their own path.**

**(2) Because of their unfaithfulness to God's prescribed Law and practice...they dishonored God and as such sealed their doom as by the time Jesus came along the Priesthood had fallen out of favor with the people....they despised them for their way of life and their lies...**

- They had made themselves wealthy and powerful.**
- They were "selective" on what they taught and what they emphasized.**
- They misused the Law... *"...causing many to stumble by your instruction."***
- They in no way protected the people especially the least of the people....they showed partiality and favoritism to those who sought and paid for their favor.**

**7. So what lessons do we learn from these verses that are applicable to us today?**

- a. We are to listen to God and not make stuff up as we go.**
- b. We are to be proclaiming God's Word wherever we are.**
- c. Our worship is what we do every day if we do it with a changed heart set of glorifying God.**
- d. God's leaders have no right to change the prescribed way of worship.**
- e. God's leaders are those who are called and confirmed. This is not a job but a calling. We gain this call by God affirmed by the church, not our lineage.**
- f. We are to preach the Word as God intended...we are not to deviate or to expand it in anyway. Otherwise we run the risk of leading people away from the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE....and we too will be cursed.**
- g. His name is great...and that greatness doesn't change when He punishes/disciplines His children...in fact, it enhances His greatness that He actually follows through with what He says unlike earthly parents.**



Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
April 28, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What were some of the highlights from chapter 1-2:9?
2. What lessons do we learn from these verses that are applicable to us today?
  - h. We are to listen to God and not make stuff up as we go.**
  - i. We are to be proclaiming God's Word wherever we are.**
  - j. Our worship is what we do every day if we do it with a changed heart set on glorifying God.**
  - k. God's leaders have no right to change the prescribed way of worship.**
  - l. God's leaders are those who are called and confirmed. This is not a job but a calling. We gain this call by God affirmed by the church, not our lineage.**
  - m. We are to preach the Word as God intended...we are not to deviate or to expand it in anyway. Otherwise we run the risk of leading people away from the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE....and we too will be cursed.**
  - n. His name is great...and that greatness doesn't change when He punishes/disciplines His children...in fact, it enhances His greatness that He actually follows through with what He says unlike earthly parents.**

C. Malachi 2:10-17

1. Looking at verses 10-12, what things do you see here that God is wanting to make clear to these people?
  - a. They profaned the covenant of their fathers in this text by:**
    - (1) Mistreatment of one another...showing partiality as if one tribe was better than another...**
    - (2) Getting "into bed" with the old habit of idolatry...probably because they had begun marrying foreign women...followers of foreign gods. This was a direct violation of God's commands to His people-**
      - Deut. 7:3-4- "You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and He would destroy you quickly."**
      - We see the same principle in the New Testament given to another group that were misusing God's Word for their own "profit, II Cor. 6:14-16- "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God."**
    - (3) By doing these they have broken both tablets of the Law; to love the LORD with all their heart mind and soul and their neighbor as themselves.**

- b. So God curses those who do these things...following up on the curse He leveled on the priests because as they have been unfaithful and disobedient so the people will be as well.**
2. Verses 13-17- Given that the first things were their disobedience in not honoring God's name, misusing God's Word for personal gain, leading the people astray from their God and then not treating their brothers and sisters with respect and the men of Judah marrying daughters of foreign gods...now we have another thing...or other things...God is pointing out through the prophet. What are they?
- a. They have been feigning repentance with their tears, weeping and groaning upset that God is not accepting your sacrifices, which means they are not receiving blessings and assurances from God.**
- (1)The way this is written we see that these folks have been really throwing a temper tantrum because God has the audacity to keep His Word as Law.**
- (2)They felt if they kept doing the same thing while they were doing their appropriate service to the temple rituals that they would be good...after all I DO what's required of me! But do they? We already know that they have been bribing the priest to take lesser animals...they have fudged on other areas of worship as well....marrying foreign women, etc.**
- b. Again with the arrogance. Look at all we do, "Why does He not?" accept our offerings and bless us more, we deserve it?**
- (1)This entitlement syndrome has been with them for a while.**
- **One tribe has been entitled over another tribe.**
  - **God loves Judah best obviously, since the Temple is in Jerusalem.**
  - **We are better than the Gentiles because we are God's chosen people.**
  - **Even Paul levels this indictment against the Jews in Rom. 2:17-24- *"But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and know His will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For, as it is written, 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.'*"**
  - **Remember there IS blessing for those who obey...none for those who do not.**
- (2)Vs. 14-16- They did not uphold the sanctity of marriage.**
- **They mistreated their relationships with the wives of their youth.**
  - **They did not teach their offspring to be godly...only to follow after their own selfish ways.**

- And they rushed to divorce when marriage was inconvenient.
- (3) Vs. 17- They weary the LORD with their useless words and questions.**
- They are making evil –good and truth falsehood.
  - They are indicting God saying He is not just...is that what they really want?
  - He had made promises.
  - Promises that He planned to keep if they would do as He says and wait on the LORD while they are obeying His Will.
- c. How does God view marriage according to this passage?
- (1) Interesting He sees marriage as something that is done early not later in life as the culture today tells us...especially if you are a woman.**
- (2) You are to deal respectfully with her as a gift of God...not faithless.**
- Which doesn't necessarily mean there was physical infidelity going on...
  - It could be simply he wasn't treating His wife as his helper, his companion which means she is equal before the LORD in status to her husband ...the gift from God...treating her with respect.
  - Not honoring his vows...doing what seems right in his own eyes without consideration for her.
- (3) He sees marriage as a covenant.**
- John Piper says, and I say this at weddings these days, *"Marriage is patterned after Christ's covenant relationship with His redeemed people, the church and therefore, the highest meaning and ultimate purpose for marriage is to put the covenant relationship of Christ and His church on display for all the world to see. This is why marriage exists: to reflect God's glory to the world. Staying married, therefore, is not mainly about staying in love...it's about keeping covenant...keeping your solemn word. 'Til death do us part' or 'For as long as I shall live' is a sacred covenantal promise...the same kind Jesus made with His bride when He died for her."*
  - Vs. 15- *"...though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union?"*
    - We are One in the LORD and we are to live together in that knowledge and glorify God as He intended.
    - If we do not act like we are one...that one is better than the other...or that "My needs are greater than hers" we break our vow and our unity is strained at best.
    - "By covenant" is at its core an unbreakable vow...there are wonderful blessing in keeping it and terrible consequences in breaking it.
  - The physical product of this covenant is godly offspring. Be fruitful and multiply was commanded of us after He blessed Adam and Eve in the garden... so we have been blessed to have godly offspring which is hard work. If we are focused on doing of jobs/calling before the LORD we will not take the family for granted.

- All of this takes the grace of God and discipline of spirit to keep from being selfish and prideful towards our wife and children...the world tells us to do what we want...God tells us uphold your vow no matter what or the consequences will lead to misery. Twice he says, *"So guard yourselves in your spirit and do not be faithless or treacherous."* to make this point.

(4) God hates divorce and will deal with it as He deals with all other sins.

- **Matthew 19:7-9-** *"They said to Him, 'Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?' He said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.'"*
  - Pharisees said "Moses commanded"...and Jesus said Moses allowed/granted divorce because of the sinfulness of the people...so divorce is a sign of sin...a death of a relationship covenanted before God.
  - Adultery at that time was still a capital crime and stood for the covenant/vow in general.
- **Deut. 24:1-4-***"When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the Lord. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance."* This passage speaks to the messiness of sin and how the woman is treated faithlessly leading to sin on all parties part which God holds against them. Divorce is a sin according to this passage.

d. What does this passage teach us about God?

e. Given the subjects and sins that have been covered so far...how do we weary the Lord today?

#### D. Malachi 3:1-5

1. Looking and listening to verse one who is the messenger spoken of here?
  - a. **John the Baptist.**
  - b. **He was the last "Old Testament" prophet to come with the exclusive calling of preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah.**
  - c. **Is. 40:3- "A voice cries: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'"**

- d. **John 1:19-23** - ***“And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ.’ And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the Prophet?’ And he answered, ‘No.’ So they said to him, ‘Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’ He said, ‘I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”***
  - e. **After all his preaching and baptizing he gets to announce the Messiah, John 1:29**- ***“The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, After me comes a man who ranks before me, because He was before me.”***
2. With that being true about the messenger of vs.1a are we dealing with the same messenger in vs. 1b-2a?
    - a. **No, this is the LORD...the Messiah...who will come to the Temple when they least expected it.**
    - b. **Luke 2:26-28**- ***“And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the Law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God.”***
    - c. **John 2:13-17**- ***“The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple He found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And He poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, ‘Take these things away; do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.’ His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.”***
    - d. **If he was coming to set up an earthly kingdom the leadership would have been forewarned and preparations would have been made...as it was everyone was surprised when He rode in on the colt of a donkey in answer to the prophecy.**
    - e. **But just maybe this reference coming suddenly also may have reference to His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming where that will be a total “surprise” for lack of a better word.**
  3. How does Malachi characterize Christ in these verses (vs. 3-5)?
    - a. **The Messiah is coming as judge...**
      - (1) **Who can endure and who can stand?**
        - **The first time as His mere presence caused many to feel judged...the Pharisees, the people in the country of the Gerasenes who told Jesus to leave after He called out the legions of evil spirits in a man and they went into pigs.**
        - **But also, at His second coming this will be His main job...judge the elect worthy in Christ, and the non-elect with eternal wrath.**

- This should cause them to “fear” the Lord which would be good for believer and non.
- (2) This is another attempt to get them to repent...as is His M-O always.
- (3) Of course, our works do not save us...our hearts must be changed...Jesus did that by taking away our sins and giving us His righteousness.
- b. The Messiah “...is like a refiner’s fire and fuller’s soap”. He will be our Sanctifier...
  - (1) We are refined so that the dross is cleaned off and we are washed in His blood....on-going sanctification in this life.
    - “Refiner’s fire”- He is doing the work of bring us forth as pure gold...melting away just the impurity and imperfections until that day when we become like Him. I Peter 1:6-7- *“...though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*
    - “Fuller’s soap”- a Fuller of sheep skins or launderer of clothes
      - Mark 9:3- *“And He was transfigured before them, and His clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.”* The Greek is “launderer or fuller”
      - Historically the fuller is one took the filthy wool of the sheep and scrubbed it clean with an extremely harsh soap to clean off the impurities found there. It was an extremely nasty job by all accounts for in dealing with the skin with dirt very often it still had the parasites/bugs that came with the animal hence these would jump onto the person biting them making the work miserable.
  - (2) A prayer by Charles Spurgeon: *“Lord, we desire this morning to contemplate with admiration Thy ways toward us. Thou hast put some of us into the furnace. There is no child of Thine but knows something of the heat of the furnace; and we perceive that Thou art as a refiner unto us, and that the fire is meant to consume our dross and tin; therefore do we thank Thee for it. For all the acts of discipline to which we are subject, we would praise the wisdom and the love of our divine Father. Thou wouldst not have us live in sin; sin is much worse than furnace work. All the trial in the world is not so hard to carry as a sense of sin. Lord, if Thou dost give us choice to keep our sins and to live in pleasure, or to have them burnt away with trial, we will say to Thee, Lord, give us the sanctified affliction, but deliver us from all the influences of sin, from every evil habit, from all the accretions of former sin, all the ore that is mixed with the precious metal, everything that diminishes the brightness of Thy grace in us; everything that keeps Thee from taking delight in us, take it away, we beseech Thee; and if this life is to BE to Thy people the crucible and the burning heat, even to a white heat, so let it be, so long as Thou/You do sit at the furnace mouth, to watch the ore that nothing be lost, just as you did the brothers in the king’s furnace so many years ago. Oh, blessed God, help any of Thy children that are in the midst of the*

***heat now. Let them see the Lord sitting near and watching, and let them be perfectly at ease, because in Thy hands all thing must be well. O Thou ever blessed, unto who's name be honour, world without end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*** – Charles Spurgeon (May 19, 1878. His Scripture passage that day for his sermon was Malachi 3:2)

- (3) So while this image is not very comforting one should take comfort in what God is doing through the fire and soap- Heb. 12:5-8- *“And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? ‘My sons, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives.’ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.”***
- (4) Vs. 3-4, Once He does this (He did it when He rose again and will do it when He comes again) then our offering is and will be acceptable...Rom. 12:1- *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”***
- (5) Vs. 5- The Lord Returns and with Him the end of His enemies.**

#### **E. Malachi 3:6-7**

1. What is verse 6 communicating?
  - a. God made a choice to place His love on these people with full knowledge of their sinfulness...after all He is the one who called them *“a stubborn and stiff-neck people”*.**
  - b. So because of His covenant promise they will not be completely consumed.**
  - c. Because it wasn't about what they had done or didn't do that caused God to choose them ...so their behavior now would not change Him now...there will be consequences for their behavior but His covenant doesn't change it is always on those He chooses to love.**
  - d. How might this passage have given them comfort and hope if they had been listening to Him?
    - (1) They might have heard and believed God and acted accordingly.**
    - (2) By telling them He has not changed He is telling them to remember the covenant...there are blessings and there are consequences...you know the drill.**
2. What does vs. 7 teach us about God's character?
3. What are we to learn here from our text this evening?

Lessons from the Minor Prophets  
May 5, 2021

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What have chapters 1-3:7 been teaching us about God?
2. Given the subjects and sins that have been covered so far that weary the LORD when His people engage in them ...how do we weary the Lord today?

C. Malachi 3:8-18

1. Mal. 3:8-12

- a. Why does the prophet answer their question at the end of vs. 7 the way he does in vs. 8-9?

**(1) They say, "How shall we return...to God?" The prophet asks, "Will man rob God?" He is speaking of their lack of compliance to giving/tithing which has been around since before the Law (Gen 14: 18-20 "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him a tenth of everything") Either they had not given enough, or not given what they were supposed to give...or just simply did not give at all. He is seemingly astonished by their arrogance and presumption:**

- It is such a daring thing to do to willfully defy God.
- It is such a shameful disgrace to purposefully be ungrateful to the One who chose you.
- It is amazingly insensitively destructive to them and the people.

**(2) We know this is what God has in mind because when they say "How have we robbed you" (God that is...they understood the prophet was talking for God.) the answer is about their tithes and contributions/offering.**

**(3) And verse 9 makes it clear that this disobedience has affected the entire nation.**

- b. How bad is this disobedience that they have engaged in?

**(1) Cursed**

**(2) Death (spiritual and physical) will ensue...as it will when the Temple is destroyed in 70 AD...the Jewish identity is taken away.**

- c. What does it mean to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse for us today (see vs. 10-12)?

**(1) Do not neglect the obedience we have been called to..**

**(2) Don't try to short change the Lord by making your own rules...**

**(3) Do as He says first and there will be blessing...unsure ...put him to the test on this and He will show you.**

- d. What are some of the reasons given today for not tithing as God commands and how would you answers those complaints?



- e. According to this text, how important is this practice of tithing to God? Or is that the only thing that God has in mind with this indictment?  
**Disobedience is what is in mind...divorce, not giving tithes, not worshipping with a correct heart, stealing from the people...all equally bring down God's wrath/punishment on these people but also a life of disobedience shows their lack of faith if they have any at all.**

2. Malachi 3:13-18

- a. What is God saying to them in vs. 13-15?

**(1) "Your words have been arrogant...How have we spoken against you?"**

**(2) Their pride is coming out before their fall.**

**(3) He basically tells them:**

- **That they refuse to acknowledge God as their sovereign.**
- **People seek to make God into their own image.**
- **They do not want to follow His will...our opinions are just as correct as what this book says.**
- **We have nothing to repent of and who has the right to judge me, anyway?**
- **If you are wealthy and you know it then it is God's blessing everyone else is the sinner.**
- **Look at all of these evil doers who get away with everything...God does not stop them so why would we bother to be righteous?**

**(4) What is the normal default when our bad habits and sins are pointed out? Why do we do that given that we know what Christ did for us to grant us salvation...taking to Himself all our sin?**

- b. What is the blessing in verses 16-18 and to whom does it go? Why? And what is its purpose?

**(1) Because some of the people repented God blesses them as an answer to His covenant...when His people walk in His way they will experience the promised and given blessings.**

**(2) That when we are "right" with the Lord we know he listens and does in fact give attention to us...this prophecy really brought home to them that God was in fact watching over them and concerned for His true people. So God has not and will not abandon them nor us.**

**(3) Interesting that they wanted to know who in fact committed themselves to the LORD so it was written down... *"...a book of remembrance was written before him (the prophet or the LORD) of those who feared the LORD and esteemed His name."* Another way of taking a vow...signing your name.**

**(4) We learn that God always has a remnant of believers in the Old Testament and He claims them/us as His own! His covenant is still in play here with these people and always will be for His people...His church always existed and always will even into eternity.**

**(5) Back in verse 14 they said there was no profit to serving God as He told them to but here in vs. 18 we see the profit...so that they will once again know the difference between evil and righteousness...which clears up so many questions on how to live before God and experience His blessings.**

**D. Malachi 4:1-6**

1. What day is referred to in vs 1-3? What does it tell us about what will happen to the 2 types of people...righteous...wicked?
  - a. **Psalm 1**
  - b. **God's judgement has been planned along time...reward for His own and wrath for His enemies...these have been foretold since genesis and they are told through revelation.**
    - (1) **Believers will see the "Sun of Righteousness" who will bring healing from all our sins in His wings.**
    - (2) **The wicked will be tread down like in the winepress or as ashes under our feet...on That Day of His Return!**
  - c. **No one is too far from God's judgment...No one will be left behind that is God's...**
  - d. **All people will be judged on that day that the old heavens and old earth are purified with fire.**
2. What final reminders are they...are we given in verses 4-6?
  - a. **They were to remember all that He has said and live accordingly.**
    - (1) **I Peter 1:3-4- "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire."**
    - (2) **Ignorance has never been an excuse...because none are ignorant of God...all people know the truth. And for those who believe His Word tells us all we need to know to live as He has prescribed.**
  - b. **They were told to look out for Elijah to come before that great and awesome day of the Lord Comes. Did this happen?**
    - (1) **On the Mount of Transfiguration...Moses and Elijah.**
    - (2) **John the Baptist was type of Elijah but he was not Elijah...by his own words he made that clear when questioned. Matt. 11:11-15- Jesus said- "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."**

**c. This prophet will turn the hearts of the children to their fathers...**

**(1) Luke 1:13-17- "But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.'"**

**(2) The Elijah...this John the Baptist will prepare the way for the One who will take away the sins ...the pride that stand in the way of the children and their father in heaven.**

**3. So how should what we have learned change us in our day to day?**

Interesting, we come to the last words of the Older Testament, if you will, and we are left with a curse. The Lord knows how the people will react. He told them just a verse above how they can stay within His grace but He throws in the curse for a couple of reasons.

1. He knows how they are going to react and once again He tells them ahead of time how things will be for them when they rebel further against Him and eventually against His Son.
2. So that the blessing will be that much sweeter...for He concludes the Newer testament, if you will with a great promise: ***"He who testifies to these things (that is, Jesus) says, 'Yes, I am coming soon'"*** And we are left to respond, ***"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."*** And the last verse says it all... ***"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen"- Rev. 22:20-21***