

A Study of the Minor Prophets

Overview

What should we gain from this study?

- Why study the minor prophets?
- Principles for understanding the minor prophets
- Place and setting of the minor prophets
- Variety of content of the minor prophets
- Basic messages of the minor prophets

Why study the minor prophets?

- They emphasize the effect of sin on man's relationship with God.
- They strengthen our faith in God
- They reinforce Jesus as Messiah
- They help us understand language that is used in the New Testament

Principles for understanding the minor prophets

- Prophets spoke as directed by the Holy Spirit
- Generically, a prophet is a spokesman for someone else
- A true prophet would not bring strange or new religions
- The words of a true prophet would come to pass
- Prophecy is conditional
- The first coming of Jesus and the establishment of the church are important subjects in Old Testament prophecy

Place and setting of the minor prophets

- They lived during the years of the divided kingdom through the period of the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles.
- Roughly, they fit into the period covered by the latter half of 2 Kings (beginning in 14:23) plus Ezra and Nehemiah
- Their works span a period of roughly 400 years



United Kingdom of Israel

Kingdom of Israel

Kingdom of Judah

Jerusalem Rebuilt

Assyrian Period

Babylonian Period

Persian Period

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah

Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Variety of content of the minor prophets

- Combination of stories about the prophet as well as collections of his oracles (Hosea, Amos)
- Primarily a story of the prophet (Jonah)
- Primarily oracles of the prophet (Joel, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai)
- Prophet brings questions to God (Habakkuk)
- Series of visions (Zechariah)
- Series of arguments between the prophet and his hearers (Malachi)

Basic messages of the minor prophets

- Prophecies against nations other than Israel and Judah (Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Zephaniah)
- Prophecies warning Israel and/or Judah prior to their exile (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah)
- Prophecies to the Jews who returned from Babylonian captivity (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

Basic messages of the minor prophets

- Consistent themes
 - Sin separates people from God
 - Judgment comes against sinners
 - Redemption and hope are found only in God

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Upcoming studies

- Each study will examine one of the minor prophets
 - Its origin
 - Its basic message
 - Why study the book?
 - Outline of the book
- Volunteers to read and to answer questions during class are greatly desired!

For Next Week...

- Read Hosea (give yourself 30 minutes)
- Consider themes of "love" and "harlotry"
- Complete Lesson 2 in the workbook