

THE BOOKS OF OBADIAH, JONAH AND MICAH

OBADIAH

Obadiah means "Servant of Jehovah". The name appears twenty times in the bible representing thirteen different people, but the only reference to this Prophet is in Verse 1 of his Book. He was God's messenger to Edom. The Book of Obadiah is the shortest Book of the Old Testament.

The Central Message

Pride deceives a person or a nation (3) and "As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee" (15).

The Structure of the Book

1. The DESTRUCTION of Edom (1-16).
2. The RESTORATION of Israel (17-21).

The Destruction of Edom

The name Edom means "red". It was given to Jacob's brother Esau because he sold his birthright for red pottage (Genesis 25:30). The Edomites, therefore, came from Esau (Genesis 36:1) and they lived in Mount Seir: a mountainous region south of the Dead Sea. It is in what we know as Jordan today. Seir means "hairy, rugged" and Esau was a hairy man (Genesis 27:11).

We are familiar with the story of the twin brothers, Jacob and Esau. The bad relationship between these two persisted throughout the centuries and is evident throughout the history of Edom.

In Numbers 20:14-21 we find Israel making a request to travel through Edom on their journey from Egypt. Their request was flatly denied.

Edom lost its identity as a nation before the time of Christ and disappeared from history in A.D. 70.

In Obadiah's day the capital of Edom was Sela or Petra, the rose red city. The ancient capital, before Obadiah was Bozrah (Isaiah 63:1).

The story of Edom is a prime example of the "curse of generations". The Edomites had a bitter hatred and spite for Israel. They hated everyone from the family of Jacob and this was their great sin (10-14).

Because of her great sin against Israel, divine judgement is pronounced upon Edom and it is summed up in Verse 15: "As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee". It happened just as God said and Edom as a nation perished; Israel remains!

The Restoration of Israel

Verses 17-21 teach us of God's protective mercy for His people. No one who fought God's covenant people ever prospered but paid dearly. These verses stress the hope of Israel in the Messianic Kingdom.

Brothers
Nations
Citizenship
Character

ESAU
EDOM
EARTHLY
PROUD/REBELLIOUS

JACOB
ISRAEL
HEAVENLY
CHOSEN/SET APART

This should help you remember the Book of Obadiah

History tells us that Edom fell to the Babylonians five years after they had helped Babylon destroy Jerusalem (13). After that, the Nabatheans (an Arabian tribe) occupied Edom's capital, Petra. By the third century even the language of Edom had ceased.

JONAH

Jonah means "dove". According to II Kings 14:25, his hometown was Gath-hepher; a small village about three miles from Nazareth. Jonah was a good example of God working through a man who was like most of us: wanted his own way, disobedient, etc.

Many believe that the Book of Jonah is fiction. I believe it to be FACT

and one of the most striking revelations of God. The lessons of Jonah and the literal interpretation of the Book are imperative because the integrity of the Scripture and the Word of the Lord Jesus are put on the line here.

Jonah was a real person (11 Kings 14:25 and Jonah 1:1). The narrative of the Book is ACTUAL and there is nothing in Scripture to suggest otherwise. Jonah contains just a few of the many supernatural events recorded in the Bible.

The Central Message

Arise, Go, Preach (1:2 and 3:2).

The Structure of the Book

1. Jonah FLEES - Chapter 1
2. Jonah PRAYS - Chapter 2
3. Jonah Preaches - Chapter 3
4. Jonah LEARNS - Chapter 4

Jonah Flees

Jonah was a Hebrew and he had been called by God to go to the Gentile capital city of Assyria, Ninevah and preach in person; face to face. Instead he runs from God's call (not a good idea) as a prophet. He did not want Ninevah spared. He took a ship in the opposite direction (3). God brought about a storm in order to get Jonah where He wanted him to be (12-17).

Jonah Prays

I believe that Jonah was in a "prepared fish" as an act of Preservation, not punishment. As Jonah prays, there is no petition, only thanksgiving, praise and redeidication. Jonah had a "change of heart" (9): "I will pay that that I have vowed". He was then vomited out on dry land.

Jonah Preaches

This one man who had been given a second chance preached to the "great city" of Ninevah and the city was turned upside down. In Luke 11:29-30, Jesus said that Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites just as He (Jesus) was a sign to His generation. The City of Ninevah repented.

Jonah Learns

Here we are presented with a dialogue between the Lord and Jonah. Jonah was angry that the Lord had spared Ninevah (4:1-3), so he went outside the city to see what might happen.

God prepared three things for Jonah while he was waiting:

1. A gourd - 4:6
2. A worm - 4:7
3. An east wind - 4:8

These things caused Jonah to wish for death, but that is followed by a Word from God to close the Book. We find that Jonah is not the important factor here, but rather the heart of God is!

Jonah as a Type

FIRST we see that he foreshadows the history of Israel: Israel out of her own land finding refuge with Gentiles, crying out to God.

SECOND he signifies the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord. Jonah came out of the fish after three days and three nights, just as Jesus came out of the tomb. The Gospel was then taken to the Gentiles.

MICAH

Micah is the prophet usually quoted at Christmas time for prophesying the actual city of the birth of Christ. Micah and Isaiah may have been close to each other and I find it interesting to note that even today we associate Micah with Jesus' birth and Isaiah (53) with the prophecy of Jesus' death. Micah means "Who is like Jehovah". He was a prophet to Judah though he often included Israel (10 tribes) and Samaria, its capital. He prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah.

The Central Message - Present JUDGEMENT; Future BLESSING.

The Structure of the Book

1. Judgement Declared - Chapters 1-3
2. Blessing Promised - Chapters 4-5
3. Exhortations to Repentance - Chapters 6-7

Judgement Declared

Jehovah was going to inflict judgement on Assyria (1:9). Chapters 2 and 3 give the details of the coming judgement against "the house of Israel".

Please note 2:7 and 3:1.

Blessing Promised

In Chapter 4 we have a "future" kingdom and in Chapter 5 we have a "future" King. It thrills my soul to know that these men of God from 25 centuries ago could be telling us today of things that are still to come. These two chapters show that these things are still future and await the Millennial era.

In 5:2 Micah gives the place of Christ's birth so plainly that when the Magi asked Herod where the King of the Jews should be born, the scribes gave a definite answer based on Micah 5:2.

Between the first half of 5:3 and the second half, this present age intervenes, which Micah could not foresee. The remainder of the chapter looks at the Kingdom Age yet future.

Exhortations to Repentance

In Chapters 6 and 7 we find a conversation between Jehovah and His people. The high mark of these pleadings is found in 6:8.

In 7:18-19 we see that God pardons and forgets.

Points of Interest in Micah

* Six specific prophecies of Micah that have become history:

1. FALL of Samaria in 722 B.C. (1:6-7)
2. INVASION of Judah in 702 B.C. (1:9-16)
3. FALL of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (3:12; 7:13)
4. CAPTIVITY in Babylon in 586 B.C. (4:10)
5. RETURN from captivity (4:1-8; 7:11. 14-17)
6. BIRTH of Jesus in Bethlehem (5:2)

FOR NEXT WEEK:
READ NAHUM, HABAKKUK AND ZEPHANIAH