



Walking Thru The Bible

OBADIAH, JONAH and MICAH

OBADIAH

INTRODUCTION

The book of Obadiah is not well known but it contains some powerful lessons for our day. It is the only one-chapter book in the Old Testament and contains only 21 verses.

The occasion of the book is some recent sack of Jerusalem by the Philistines and Arabians in which Edom had aided and abetted. She had encouraged Judah's foes, enjoyed Judah's fall, and enslaved Judah's fugitives. The book warns Edom of her own coming destruction for her sins against her brother.

BACKGROUND

The Edomites were descendants of Esau, Jacob's twin brother, and hence a "cousin" nation to Judah and Israel. Yet the Edomites were in constant conflict with them. Edom was a narrow strip of mountainous country to the south of the Dead Sea. So rugged is the terrain that the valley in which Petra, one of their capital cities, is located can only be reached through a narrow canyon guarded by towering mountain walls 200-500 feet high (vs.3-4).

EDOM's SIN

Edom is condemned for her pride and her cruelty. Her crimes are described in progressive stages: (1) Edom stood by while Jerusalem was invaded v.11; (2) She rejoiced over the captivity of sons of Judah v.12; (3) She actively participated in looting Jerusalem v.13; and (4) Edom set up road blocks to prevent the citizens from escaping v.14 and sold them into slavery.

She is condemned for her cruelty and unbrotherliness: (1) cruelty of the *feet*, v.11 "she stood afar off"; (2) cruelty of the *eyes*, v.13 "looked on in his disaster; (3) cruelty of the *heart*, v.12 she rejoiced in Jeru.'s destruction; (4) cruelty of the *tongue*, v.12; she spoke proudly; (5) cruelty of the *hands*, v.13, laid hands on Judah's substance and cut off escape.

OUTLINE OF EDOM

1. The Doom of Edom -- v. 1-9
2. The Denunciation of Edom -- v. 10-14
3. The Destruction of Edom -- v. 15-21

JONAH

INTRODUCTION

The book of Jonah is a humiliating confession by its author that shows his growth in the Lord as he becomes the great prophet of 2 Kings 14. Jonah had to learn some important lessons: namely, that God is everywhere and one can't run away from Him; and secondly that God is concerned about every nation and the citizens, the children and even the animals in every nation.

The book is often accused of being myth by modernist and religious liberals because of the miracle of the great fish. But Jonah was a real person (2 Kings 14:24) and Jesus credited the story of the great sea creature as factual (Matt. 12:39-41).

The Lord also represents the story as true that Nineveh repented (Luke 11:29-32). There is no way to doubt the historicity of Jonah and have regard for the integrity of Jesus.

BACKGROUND

Jonah was a well known prophet of God associated with the royal court of Jeroboam II (ca 790-749 BC). Jonah was a states-man prophet like Isaiah and Jeremiah, not a 'backwoods' prophet like Elijah or John the Baptist.

He was called to cry against that "great city" Nineveh, the capital of Assyria and long time enemy of Israel. Nineveh was surrounded by a complex of suburbs with a heavy population of about 600,000 at this time. It was fortified with several walls, the greatest defense being a wall 8 miles long and 100 feet high and wide enough for three chariots to drive abreast, with 1500 towers which were 200 feet high.

Jonah's experience was a "sign" to the people of Nineveh and they repented upon hearing his message of destruction for their city. In sack cloth and ashes they showed remorse for their evil and God spared them from destruction to the regret and pouting of Jonah.

OUTLINE OF JONAH

- Chapter 1 Jonah Running AWAY from God
- Chapter 2 Jonah Running TO God
- Chapter 3 Jonah Running WITH God
- Chapter 4 Jonah Running AHEAD of God

A key passage that allows us to understand why Jonah tried to resign his duty as a prophet, and also gives us great insight into the character of the wonderful and magnificent God who is our Creator is found in 4:2 "... for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. (Jonah 4:2)

MICAH

INTRODUCTION

Micah was from among the common people in a little town in southwest Judah, Moresheth, who prophesied for about a thirty year span during the reigns of Jotham (750-732 BC), Ahaz (736-716 BC) and Hezekiah (716-687 BC).

Micah was a contemporary with Isaiah and was preaching the same message Isaiah was preaching, but Isaiah was God's prophet to the royal court while Micah preached among the common people rather than the Jewish aristocracy.

The book of Micah is sometimes called a miniature version of Isaiah (cf. Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4).

HIS MESSAGE

Micah preached a message of repentance to the people of Judah and looked forward to the day of the coming Messiah's universal kingdom (4:1-3). The reign of Christ would offer salvation to all nations alike. He promised a peace and prosperity that has its fulfillment in the spiritual life of the kingdom of God and not in the affairs of civil states.

Like Isaiah, he condemned the meaningless ritual of their sacrifices and ceremonies (6:7-8). He emphasized that the people's heart and conduct must match their professed allegiance and worship to God. They were performing their religious ceremonies but ignoring the kind of life their commitment to God expected from them.

The Lord's expectation from his people is express in Micah 6:8 "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

MICAH Elsewhere In The BIBLE

Some important quotations from Micah are found elsewhere in the Bible. One saved the live of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 26:18 from Mic. 3:12). The priests and scribes quoted Micah 5:2 in answer to Herod's question about the birthplace of the Messiah (Matt. 2:5-6). Christ quoted Micah 7:6 when He commissioned the disciples the first time (Matt. 10:35-36).

OVERVIEW of the Book of MICAH

Micah announced punishment from God against both Israel (1:1-7) and Judah (1:8-16). The reasons for this judgment are given (2:1-11), and the restoration of the remnant is promised (2:12-13). After describing the present sorry state of affairs (3:1-12), he speaks of the future glory to be revealed in Christ in the Christian age (4:1-5:15).

The book ends with a plea for repentance. God's complaint against the people (6:1-16) leads Micah to lament the lack of righteousness in Jerusalem (7:1-6), confess the sins of the nation (7:7-17), and rejoice in the mercies of the Lord (7:18-20).

EDOM AND THE PRIDE OF NATIONS

Introduction:

Background on Edom: The Edomites were a rough and tough group of mountain people. They lived in the desert-mountain region of Mt. Seir, reaching from south of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Arabah. They carved great protective fortresses in the rock mountains and canyons. One of their principle cities was Sela (Hebrew), or Petra (Greek), which simply meant "The Rock" and was carved out of the side of the mountains. The rose-red, orange and yellow mountain wall made Petra a colorful stronghold.

I. EDOM TRUSTED HER FORTIFICATIONS (v. 3-4)

Nestled in the cliffs high above the plains they likened them-selves to the eagle which made its nest in the heights of the mountains. They thought their city was impregnable and that they could never be brought down.

II. EDOM TRUSTED IN HER TREASURES (v. 5-6)

At this time Edom was the center of caravan routes from south to north and east to west. The caves in Petra were used as storehouses for merchandise.

III. EDOM TRUSTED IN HER ALLIES AND FRIENDS (v.7)

Edom trusted her confederates and peace treaties but God warns they would deceive her and turn against her.

IV. EDOM TRUSTED IN HER WISDOM AND WISE MEN (v.8)

The Edomites were known for their wisdom and cunning. But the time was to come when such would be destroyed among them and they could not be counted on for deliverance.

V. EDOM TRUSTED IN HER "MIGHTY MEN" (warriors v. 9)

Edom trusted that her mighty army of strong warriors would be able to defend her against any and every foe. But when God was ready to bring her down it didn't matter what size army or how brave they were.

CONCLUSION:

No human effort can save the guilty nation from God's destructive power. Rock fortresses, impregnable mountains, narrow mountain gorges, dependable allies and proud warriors cannot avail. When the Lord has decreed a nations' humiliation nothing will change that except repentance.

We must remember that our hope is in God. Prov. 16:18; 29:23.