

LESSON #9

THE PROPHETS - THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

There are four major prophets in the Old Testament: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. The Jews considered these major prophets because of the length of their prophetic message. This is not to infer that the writings of the minor prophets were any less important, for they were all inspired by God through the Holy Spirit. These inspired men were sent to teach Israel the ways of righteousness and to warn them of the consequence of violating His laws. Foremost of their failures that persisted till the Babylonian captivity, was idolatry. This was in violation of the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me". The violation of this law led directly to the downfall of the nation of Israel. However, it is interesting to note that after the reformation under Ezra and Nehemiah, idolatry was never again a problem among the Jewish people.

Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel were contemporary (lived at the same time) and the times in which they prophesied overlapped. Jeremiah prophesied from 626 to 586 B.C., or about 40 years in Jerusalem. Daniel who was taken captive to Babylon while a young man, prophesied from 607 to 534 B.C., a total of 73 years. Ezekiel prophesied from 592 to 570 B.C., 22 years while living in Babylon. The prophecies we will consider below, relate to the captivity of Judah and the many prophecies concerning the Messiah. These Messianic prophecies were the source of hope and encouragement that sustained the faithful people during the desolate years of their captivity.

Amos 3:1-7 Verse 7 is the key to the consideration for this topic and the following concerning the Purpose of God with the Jews: "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."

vv.1-2 establish the principle upon which God's judgments are directed against His people. The second verse, in particular, emphasizes that the Jews were a people who had been chosen exclusively from all the nations of the earth to bear God's name. Therefore, God's honor and dignity were directly linked to the actions of the children of Israel. The responsibility for the honor resulted in punishment if they profaned His name.

Jeremiah 25:11-12 Jeremiah prophesies that the Jews would go into exile in Babylon and the duration of their captivity would be 70 years. This was fulfilled exactly according to the prophecy and will be discussed in more detail in our next lesson.

Jeremiah 23:1-8 While much of the message of Jeremiah was warnings to change from their evil path, this portion of his prophecy reminds them of the Messianic hope to Israel.

vv.5-6 Identify the Messiah as a member of David's royal house. This heralds back to the message given to King David concerning his "seed". There is also a projection of the blessing of the Jewish people at the time when the "branch" shall be their King and the nation shall prosper.

Jeremiah 33:7-9 These verses contain the promise of the restoration of Judah and Israel and the cleansing of the nation from their sins.

vv.14-26 Re-affirm the Messianic message of hope.

Daniel 2 We read this wonderful chapter as a clear demonstration of God's prophetic revelation of world history and the ultimate revealing of Christ as "the little stone" to come in answer to the promise of God to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth.

Luke 20:17 In fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy, Christ is the "stone which the builders rejected," and is destined in the plan of God to become the ruler over the kingdoms of men. God will invest him with power and authority to put down man's dominion over the kingdoms of the world and exalt the Kingdom of God over the earth. "The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever." Rev. 11:15

