

Cycle 3: Theological Survey

A Biblical-Theological Survey of Moses, Prophets and the Writings

Latter Prophets: Book of the Twelve

Interpreting the Twelve

Rev. Charles R. Biggs, Th.M.

<u>What was a prophet?</u> A prophet was one who is called and who proclaims the Word of God by the empowerment of the Spirit to the priests, the kings, and the people. A prophet speaks a message from God about God. "*Thus says YHWH…*" was the Prophet's message.

^{ESV} 2 Chronicles 15:1-5: The Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded, ² and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: <u>The LORD is with</u> <u>you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he</u> <u>will forsake you.</u> ³ For a long time Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest and without law, ⁴ <u>but when in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and</u> <u>sought him, he was found by them</u>. ⁵ In those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for great disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands.

Summary of Prophet's Message and Ministry:

- Spirit Anointed to speak for God (2 Peter 1:20-21)
- Spirit Anointed to speak to the people (usually through the Kings/Priests)
- Spirit Anointed to speak the Gospel message (note unconditional/conditional aspects of Covenant of Grace-Gospel)
- Spirit Anointed to remind the people of God's ongoing, covenantal faithfulness.

<u>Link to Book of Deuteronomy</u> (Torah/Teaching of Moses)- What was required of Israel? How were they to live in light of YHWH's grace and word in reliance upon the Holy Spirit?

ESV Deuteronomy 10:12-13: "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?

Fear

Walk

Love

Serve

Keep

= True Piety/True Religion in both Old and New Covenants

Remember, that the Gospel produces a whole person restoration-transformation by God's grace and Spirit, that brings well-being-shalom-peace-contentment-joy-well-ordered affections-loves in Christ: fear, walking, loving, serving, keeping, etc.

> ESV Deuteronomy 18:15-19: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers- it is to him you shall listen-¹⁶ just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.'¹⁷ And the LORD said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.¹⁹ And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

Interpreting the Book of the Twelve (Minor Prophets):

^{ESV} Romans 15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

We should interpret the Book of the Twelve in three "readings" (which is how we should interpret the Old Testament as God's people):

- 1) **First Reading:** "How did the people of Israel first hear the words of the prophets within *their cultural milieu*?"- Considering the message of the prophet in his historical context and time period in redemptive-history.
- Second Reading: "How do the prophets point to Jesus Christ?" (cf. Luke 24:24ff): Considering the message of the prophet as it becomes clearer throughout redemptive-history, and particularly with the coming of Jesus Christ.

$\frac{\text{TYPE} \rightarrow \text{ANTITYPE}}{\text{PROPHET} \rightarrow \text{JESUS}}$ $\text{ISRAEL} \rightarrow \text{CHURCH}$ $\text{NATIONS} \rightarrow \text{UNBELIEVERS}$

 <u>Third Reading:</u> "How do we read the prophets "in Christ as the Church today"? Considering the message of the prophet as it applies and has implications for Christ's Church today.

Let us remember what our father in the faith, <u>John Calvin wrote as the very "key" to rightly</u> interpreting and understanding the prophets:

"...I urge readers to remember to use the key which I gave them, so that they may understand aright. That is, whenever the prophets describe the bliss awaiting believers and which appears as but a tiny shadow in this world, let them recall this distinction: to provide a clearer picture of God's goodness, the prophets portrayed it figuratively in terms of earthly advantages. While portraying them this way they nevertheless meant to lift men's hearts above the earth, above the elements of this world and above this perishable sphere, and to lead them to meditate on the blessedness of the spiritual life" (Calvin, Institutes, 1541, 446-47).

Common Sermon Form of the Prophets of the Book of the Twelve

The sermons or prophecies of "The Twelve" have a three-part structure; this is often called a <u>"covenant lawsuit"</u>:

- 1) Accusations against Israel
- 2) Judgment as a consequence for their sins
- 3) Eschatological Hope for repentant believers

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