

# 17-18 Bible Study #12

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# The Prophet Obadiah

# Administrative Information

- The Bible Study Class will be presented in the parish hall every Tuesday morning from **9:30 A.M. until 11 A.M.** beginning **September 12, 2017** and ending **May 15, 2018** except for the following Tuesdays related to a holiday:
  - Nov 21, 2017 – Thanksgiving Week
  - **Dec 26, 2017 – Christmas Week**
  - **Jan 2, 2018 - New Year's Week**
  - Mar 27, 2018 – Holy Week
- The same class will be given every Tuesday evening from **7:30 until 9:00 P.M.** in the parish hall
- Contact info (703) 644-5873; email [rew6710@gmail.com](mailto:rew6710@gmail.com)
- Inclement weather decision will be **based on Fairfax County Public School announcements**

# Obadiah

- Obadiah was a prophet to the Edomites
- The Hebrew word *Edom* means “red” and is derived from the name of its legendary founder, *Esau*, the older son of the Hebrew patriarch *Isaac*, because he was born “red all over” (**Genesis 25:19-33**)
- God sent Obadiah to prophesy to *Edom* to warn them about the coming destruction of the country
- The Kingdom of *Edom* was destroyed by a marauding bands of Arabs from the desert know as the Nabataeans in 312 B.C.
- The kingdom was sacked, obliterated, destroyed (although they did not come north and attack Jerusalem)

# Obadiah

- The dates of their destruction are disputed as being between the **9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.** and the **Greek period of 322 to 63 B.C.** most likely in around 500 B.C.
- Some see it dealing with *Edom* taking advantage of the destruction of Jerusalem after 587 B.C.
- Is the shortest prophetic book (21 verses)
- The prophet presents a vision of history that interpreted God's plan for Israel in relationship with *Edom*
- ***They become the land of the Idumeans*** home of Herod the Great

# Obadiah

- He offers two visions:
  - Various oracles depicting God's judgment on Edom
  - A proclamation on the salvation of Zion
- The message presents certain vital truths in the life of faith of Israel including
  - The Day of Yahweh when God will overthrow Israel's enemies (destruction of Edom)
  - Yahweh as the Lord of history who will bring about salvation to Israel while other nations experience judgment
  - Restoration

# Obadiah

- Half the book of Obadiah can be found in an almost identical passage in **Jeremiah 49:7-22**
- Most scholars believe that they were independently developed
- Next, we will turn to the prophet **Malachi**, the last prophetic book

# The Prophet Malachi



# Malachi 432-424 B.C. Post Ex

- The name Malachi means “my messenger”
- The only information about the prophet Malachi comes from his writings
- He discussed the conditions in Jerusalem around 525-500 B.C.
- He was preoccupied with the temple and its sacrifices
- At the time of Malachi the people had built the Temple to house the Ark of the Covenant and the glory cloud but they had not returned

# Malachi

- Malachi tells the people that:
  - The Lord was not happy with their sacrifices (blemished animals)
  - They were not ready for His return as they were still wicked and therefore would be destroyed if He returned at that time
  - Before the Lord returns *Elijah* will reappear to gather together **a remnant** from among the wicked and pagan people
    - According to Jesus, John the Baptist fulfills this promise
- Thus, the 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish people were looking for *Elijah*, a prophet like Moses and/or the Messiah

# Malachi

- **Malachi 1:1-14**
- *Esau* refers to the *Edomites* who hoped to rebuild their cities after their destruction by a tribe of Aram marauders
- But God proclaimed that He would never allow them to rebuild
- The Jews wondered what prevented the roving band of Arabs who destroyed Edom from attacking Jerusalem?
- They understood that it was Yahweh who had protected them but wondered why had the glory cloud not returned?

# Malachi (Cont)

- Malachi told them that God had not returned because **they were not ready for His return**
- They rebuilt the city, the temple and the walls but they were **not spiritually ready** for His return
- Although the people of Judah had restored the sacrificial system in accordance with the Law of Moses, they were offering lame animals and were treating God as if He was a pagan god needing to be fed

# Malachi (Cont)

- Malachi asked the people why they failed to honor God by offering Him polluted sacrifices
- **Malachi 2** reveals God's promised curse on the priesthood should they refuse to reform and return to the covenant of Moses \*

# Malachi (Cont)

- **Malachi 3:1-18**

- God promised to send a messenger to the people to prepare the way for His coming
- He warned them that He was on the way, and He was about to enter the temple
- Yet, if he came while they were still offering polluted sin offerings, they would be burned up like impurities in a refiner's fire
- He said he was coming in judgment because they were robbing him of His tithes
- He told them that He would not restore their blessings until they repented
- Then He promised to spare those who feared the Lord \*

# Malachi (Cont)

- **Malachi 4:1-5**

- The fire will be like a forest fire that leaves nothing but ashes
- The people must have wondered when this would happen
- God then told them that He would send *Elijah* before that terrible day
- As we know from Jesus, the return of *Elijah* can be seen as the arrival of *John* the Baptist
- *Elijah* also appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration

# Malachi (Cont)

- We can see that God sent the prophet Malachi to inform the people that God was coming and that the glory cloud was going to return to the temple
- But when He comes the wicked will be annihilated by a massive fire leaving only the righteous (remnant)
- All of this prophesy will be fulfilled in the New Testament



# Transition

- Before looking at the Books of Maccabees we will make a brief review of the prophet **Joel**

# The Prophet Joel

# Joel

- Was the son of *Pethuel*
- Exact dates of prophesy are unknown
- Earlier scholars place him in 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.
- Others see his ministry after the exile and the dedication of the second Temple (400 B.C.)
- Was educated, for he included poetry and prose in his works
- **Preached to the people of Judah**

# Joel (Cont)

- Had a great love for the temple and its spirituality
- Was concerned with the spirituality of the priests and the effectiveness of sacrificial offerings and feasts
- Focused on **the way God will** overthrow the present state of the world when he comes to **bring judgment and salvation on the “Day of Yahweh”**

# Joel (Cont)

- His book is divided into two sections:
  - An oracle responding to a terrible plague of locusts ravaging the land of Israel as a way of understanding **how God will overthrow the existing world** and bring judgment and salvation
  - A discussion of the “Day of Yahweh” when God will pour forth his spirit on all the people

# Joel

- Chief themes of his prophetic discourse include:
  - A somber warning of the judgment of Yahweh intended to rouse the people from the existing moral lethargy
  - A joyful, glowing expressed tidings of God's work of salvation designed to keep the faith alive in the coming Kingdom of God

# Joel

- Since **he prophesied about the destruction of Jerusalem**, many see him as a pre-exilic prophet
- But several post-exilic prophets spoke about a second destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.)
  - **Daniel 9** references a second destruction of Jerusalem
  - **Zechariah 12 – 14** also references a coming destruction of Jerusalem
- Further, we see in **Joel 3:6** a reference to the **King of the Greeks**
- Also, that the people of Jerusalem had sold themselves to the Greeks

# Joel (Cont)

- This sounds like the events we will see concerning *Antiochus Epiphanes* in **1<sup>st</sup> Maccabees**
- This would indicate that he was a post-exilic prophet
- His major prophesy was about the destruction of Jerusalem
- Further, Peter in his speech in **Acts**, speaks about the prophesy in **Joel 2:28** where the spirit will be unleashed on all flesh at the moment of Pentecost



# Transition

- We will now turn our attention to **1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees**

# The Books of 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees

# Key Dates

- ***King Nebuchadnezzar* – 605-562 B.C.**
- ***King Cyrus* – 550 – 525 B.C.**
  - Fall of Babylon and the **Edict of Cyrus** – 539 B.C. allowed Jews to return to Israel and rebuild the Temple and the city
  - Based on prophecies of *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*
  - **1<sup>st</sup> return – 538 B.C.**
    - **Zerubbabel** was the governor
    - **Jeshua** was the high priest
    - The Altar was built 536 B.C. (construction on the rest of temple halted for 20 years)
    - The Samaritan offer to help was rejected

# Key Dates

- 536 B.C. Foundation of the Temple was laid
  - Youth rejoiced
  - Elderly wept
- 534 – 520 B.C. B.C. work stopped due to Samaritan harassment

# Key Dates

- **2<sup>nd</sup> return 525-457 BC**
- *The prophet **Haggai*** called for the people to return to the construction of the Temple
- *The Prophet **Zechariah*** called for construction of the Temple 520 – 480 B.C.
- **King Darius 522-486 B.C.**
  - Jews were ordered to stop building of Jerusalem
  - Issued an edict to stop construction
  - Asked by the Jews to check the records of Cyrus
  - Finds Cyrus letter and allowed building to resume
  - Temple was completed and dedicated – 515 B.C.

# Key Dates

- ***King Artaxerxes*** 465-424 B.C.
  - Restoration of the temple and Jerusalem
  - Allows *Nehemiah*, his cupbearer, to return and rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem
- **3<sup>rd</sup> return 444 B.C.**
  - **Nehemiah** led the rebuilding of walls of Jerusalem – 444 B.C.
  - ***Ezra*** returned and taught in Jerusalem in 458 B.C.

# Kings of Persia

- **Cyrus the Great – 550 -529 B.C.**
  - Cambyses II – 529-522 B.C.
- **Darius I – 522-486 B.C.**
  - Xerxes I – 486-465 B.C.
- **Artaxerxes I – 465-425 B.C.**
  - Xerxes II -425-424 B.C.
  - Darius II – 423-404 B.C.
  - Artaxerxes II – 404-359 B.C.
  - Artaxerxes III – 359-338 B.C.
  - Arses – 338-336 B.C.
- **Darius III – 336-330 B.C.**

# Important Kings of the Greece Empire

- **Alexander the Great 356-323 B.C.**
  - Defeated **King Darius III in 330 B.C.**
  - Died in 323 B.C. at age 38
  - Succeeded by four generals who divided the empire
  - **Ptolemy I - VI 323- 170 B.C.**
    - Controlled Egypt
    - Defeated by **Antiochus Epiphanes in 170 B.C.**
  - **Seleucus I- IV - 305-175 B.C.**
    - Controlled Syria
    - Defeated **Ptolemy VI** in 175 B.C.
    - Controlled Palestine



# 1st Maccabees (Cont)

- It was written:
  - By a scribe living in Jerusalem
  - In Hebrew (yet only found in Greek)
  - To present the exploits of the Maccabees in the glorious terms of Moses, Joshua, Saul and David
  - To applaud the attacks on the Seleucids and later Syrian occupying forces

# Overview of Maccabees

- **1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees:**
  - Do not follow one another in a time sequence
  - Cover overlapping time from different theological perspectives
  - Should be read in parallel

# 1st Maccabees

- Narrates the history of the Jews under King Antiochus IV (175 B.C. ) until the high priesthood of John Hyrcanus (134 B.C.)
- It spans the careers of:
  - Mattathias
  - Judas
  - Jonathan
  - Simon