

Introduction

- The average Christian rarely interacts with the prophetic books of the Bible.
- The primary reason is that they are ill-equipped and don't know how to read them.
- We need to remember the genre when we read books of the Bible.
- We need to remember where this book falls in the whole narrative of Scripture.
- We need to remember the importance of the Covenant and Law of Moses.
- Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 are vital to understand the prophets.

Analogy of the Game

- It can be helpful to picture the prophets as a part of a sports game.
- The teams are Israel, Judah, and the other nations.
- The rules of the game are the Law of Moses and the Noahic Covenant.
- God is the referee or judge or decides who passes out rewards and punishment.
- The penalties are curses.
- The awards or scores are the blessings.
- Kings are like the team captain who represents the whole nation.
- Historian prophets, like Samuel, are like play-by-play announcers.
- Writing prophets, like Zephaniah, are like color commentators.

Blessings

- Obedience brings blessings.
- Obedience for Israel is faithfulness to the covenant and God's laws.
- Blessing of rain and good harvests (v. 4-5).
- Blessing of peace from enemies, even wild animals (v. 6)
- Blessing of easily conquering much larger foes
- Their nation will multiply and continue to grow (v. 9).
- They will never run out of food or supplies (v. 10).
- God will be and walk among them.
- God, who took them from slavery, will make them proud.

Curses

- Disobedience will bring consequences.
- First consequences is disease, poor harvest, attacks from enemies, and poor leaders.
- Refusal to repent leads to a sevenfold increase in discipline.
- Poor harvest will turn into famine.
- Sevenfold increase again when wild beasts ravage the land.
- Sevenfold increase to widespread famine and attack from enemies.
- Sevenfold increase to desolate cities and exile.
- The land will finally enjoy the Sabbaths that have not been observed.

Possibility of Repentance

- There is forgiveness and a way out.
- They must confess their sins, humble themselves, and make amends.
- God will remember the promises He made to the patriarchs.
- God will not forget them nor totally destroy them.
- They will be brought out again like from Egypt.

Examples in Zephaniah

- Building a house they can't live in (Zeph 1:13; Deut 28:30).
- Stumble like blind man (Zeph 1:17; Deut 28:29).
- Judah will go into exile because of their lack of repentance.
- Other nations will be desolated because of mistreatment of others.
- Restoration is promised at the end because of God's faithfulness.

Examples in Haggai

- Haggai's charge is that Israel is rebuilding their homes instead of the temple.
- The curses are small harvests
- Clothes that won't warm them.
- Wages that disappear.
- The land in a drought with no rain and barely any harvests.
- When they repent, the harvests will multiply and their enemies will be destroyed.

Takeaways

- Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 are the most important chapters for understanding the prophets.
- Knowing the theme of the prophets helps us understand the details.
- The prophets help us understand and appreciate the gospel.