PRE-EXILIC PROPHETS IN JUDAH

Introduction

Let us study about the Minor prophets who ministered in Judah before Babylonian captivity.

33.
MICAH

(Meaning 'Who is like unto Jehovah')

The prophet Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah was from a country town in Judah, the southern Kingdom. He was convinced that Judah was about to face the same kind of national catastrophe that Amos had predicted for Israel. Micah's message however contains more clear and notable signs of hope for the future. He said that a remnant would be saved in spite of God's punishment (Micah.5:7-8). He predicted the attack from the Assyrians.

The credit goes to Micah for prophesying the birth place of Christ 700 years before His birth (Micah.5:2).

34.
NAHUM

(Meaning 'Comforter') B.C.650-630.

Nahum from Galilee preached to Nineveh 150 years after Jonah. The Ninevites had gone back to wickedness again, despite their

deliverance from destruction as the result of their repentance by Jonah's preaching. Nahum warned about the coming judgment. But people rejected his message, the city was totally destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar 50 years later. Prophecies concerning the future hope of Israel are also mentioned in the book.

35.

HABAKKUK

(Meaning 'embrace' or 'to wrestle') B.C.600.

He was a contemporary of Jeremiah. He was a prophet burdened for his own people in Judah seeing their moral and spiritual declension. He looked around and saw violence, strife, injustice, wickedness etc., in his society. He made several complaints to God about God's silence and inactivity when the people of a God lived below their standard. (Ch.1:2-4). Then God answered him saying that He was about to do a work which was unbelievable i.e., giving the people in to the hands of Babylonian king (v.5). This made Habakkuk all the more upset. He had another complaint about God's inconsistency in disciplining His own people by the hands of Babylon.

A good example can be found in Habakkuk's waiting in God's presence until he received God's answer to all his complaints. The most famous statement of the assurance of faith- 'The just shall live by faith' was the first answer he received (2:4). The third chapter is a Psalm of Habakkuk, which declares the strongest and the most trusting words against all odds of life. After giving a long list of negatives, he boldly states, "Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord." (3:17-18).

36.

ZEPHANIAH

(Meaning 'Jehovah hid'): B.C.630- 610.

He was a prophet in the days of Josiah. He was from the royal household of Hezekiah (1:1). Perhaps his prophecies of impending judgment helped stimulate the God-fearing king Josiah purge of Judah's idolatry. His message makes it clear that God is loving (3:17) but will punish the wicked (1:2). He pronounced judgment on princes, rich men, prophets and priests who all forsook the Lord. He called people to repentance before the wrath of God was poured out (2:1-2) He predicted that the humble and pious people in Israel would be protected even in the midst of judgment (3:12-17).

All the prophets who prophesied before the Babylonian captivity had foreseen the impending disaster coming upon the nation. God gives us warnings through His servants beforehand for the clear reason that we return to God and set ourselves aright before Him. He is good to heed to such warnings before it is too late and the hand of God becomes too hard for us.

Reference : Joel 2:1-32

Mem. Verse : Joel 2:12,13

EXERCISE

1. *What is the meaning of "Joel"? Give an account of this Book.*
2. *What is the meaning of "Obadiah"? What is striking about this Book? What did Obadiah pronounce in this book?*
3. *What is the meaning of "Micah"? Give an account of his background and message.*
4. *What is the meaning of "Nahum"? Give an account of this Book.*
5. *What is the meaning of "Habakkuk"? What was God's answer to his complaints?*
6. *What was Zephaniah's message and predictions?*