

The Minor Profits

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[0 : 00] We are taking a brief detour. I expect that this morning's session will probably be the last of it. We are actually going through the Minor Prophets, and we selected those. Actually, I didn't select them. You did. That was your choice. So we are dealing with the Minor Prophets.

And in the last session together, in what would be the first of our just brief aside from the Minor Prophets, we looked somewhat extensively at the ministry and the role of the prophet, and the Old and New Testament examples of prophets. And we spent quite a bit of time with the ministry of Stephen in Acts chapter 7, and we pointed out the principle that there are times when doing and saying the right thing can get you into a lot of trouble, can even cost you your life, as it would that of our Lord Jesus and the prophets before him and Stephen, who is later going to follow in Acts chapter 7. And you'll recall that Stephen delivered that blistering indictment against the Sanhedrin or the council when he stood before them, and he said, which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? So the persecution of prophets is an age-old thing that goes all the way back. And the reason that they were persecuted was because they were delivering an unpopular, unwanted message. But at the same time, it was always a needed message. It was a message that demanded repentance and a turnaround, otherwise there is going to be divine judgment visiting you.

We see this all throughout Scripture, Old and New Testament as well. It is virtually inescapable. So the ministry of a prophet is there by the grace of God because they are always brought up by God to deliver a warning. In the case of John the Baptist, we're told in John 1, there was a man sent from God whose name, whose name was John. And John began his ministry as a priest and one from the tribe of Levi.

And his mother and father were both Levites. And John delivered a stunning message that Israel had been waiting for 4,000 years to hear. And now he is delivering it. And it is repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[2 : 43] And fellas, I cannot emphasize too much how important that issue is. Some of you are familiar with G.N.H. Peters and the Theocratic Kingdom, set on the Millennial Kingdom. And not only that, but The Greatness of the Kingdom by Dr. Alva McLean, which is a tremendous book. And they both emphasize what this thing called humanity and existence is really all about.

And it is the restoration or restitution of all things. Because as the world was originally created, God pronounced it very good. We know that chaos entered when Adam and Eve disobeyed the first parents and they brought down ruination upon the whole creation of which we are a part.

And that followed with the promise of a Redeemer as early as Genesis 3.15, the seed of the woman, is going to be God's fix-it man. And he will also be known as the Messiah. And he is going to come and set everything right, redeem the earth, make it the way it is supposed to be before the ruin.

And that's what John was talking about. When John came preaching that message, repent for the kingdom of heaven at his hand. He didn't say repent for this is the kingdom of heaven. He didn't say that. He said it is at hand. It is nearby. It is close.

And that was the kingdom that everyone, particularly those who were Jews, were anticipating and looking forward to. And it's really significant, guys, because when John started his baptism, who did he baptize? He baptized everybody. Well, not everybody, but he baptized Jews.

[4 : 31] And there doesn't seem to be any discrimination at all, because previous to this time, the baptism was only for the priests when they were initiated into the priesthood at the age of 30.

And John experienced that baptism. But now John is baptizing everyone who came to him. And they were all Jews. There was a huge crowd of people. We don't know how many. We aren't given

numbers. But there were multitudes who came to him.

And we do not know if that was limited to men, because the text just doesn't make it clear. But the really significant thing about it is, John was baptizing all who came to him rather indiscriminately upon their admission of their sin, their repentance of their sin, in response to what God told Israel way back in Exodus 19, that he was going to make Israel a kingdom of priests. Super significant. Because the nation of Israel had just one priestly tribe, and that was Levi. And Levi was to function in a priestly way for all the other 11 tribes. Well, if the whole nation of Israel are to be priests, to whom are they going to function and minister? And that is the Gentiles, all the rest of the world. They will be a nation of priests. So that's John's message. And when he began preaching that, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, people were absolutely stunned and super excited, because they had waited for this message for a long, long time. And now he is introducing the king who is going to be responsible for establishing that kingdom, because you can't have a kingdom without a king. And here comes the Lamb of God, slain before the foundation of the world, second cousin to John, and he introduces him as the Lamb of God, as the Messiah. And in John chapter 1, he says, so, John chapter 1, he says, that he came, John came baptizing for the purpose of introducing Jesus to Israel as their Messiah. And that set in motion the singular burning issue for all of

[7 : 09] Israel. And that is this. Is Jesus of Nazareth the one promised by Moses and the prophets, or is he not? Many of the common people said he was. And the 12 apostles said he was. And Peter issued that tremendous confession. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God. And the 12 believed it. And of course, many who followed Jesus and saw his miracles and heard his teachings, they believed it. But the official establishment of Israel turned thumbs down. Not only on Jesus, but on John as well. Both of them were rejected. And that meant that something that we would look upon as very unfortunate has happened to short circuit the reality of this kingdom being established. And I want you to go first of all, if you would, to Luke chapter 19. And we've been here before some time ago, but this is really, really important, really important. Luke's gospel chapter 19. And bear in mind, if you will, that this is shortly before Jesus is going to Jerusalem for the last time. And it is this visit to Jerusalem that will cost him his life. He will end on a cross. And it's very significant. In verse 11 of chapter 19, we read, while they were listening to these things, he went on to tell a parable. And don't overlook this word, because Jesus never went around just spouting off parables. The parables and the teaching that he gave always had a connection to something that was taking place at hand. And this is no exception. This, this particular parable is very appropriate because of where they are and what's taking place. And notice, it is because he was nearing Jerusalem and they, that is the 12 who were with him, they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. Now, it was an erroneous supposition, but you may be sure it was one they made in good faith. And why were they thinking that way?

Well, they had already accepted Jesus as the Messiah, as the King, and they were going to Jerusalem. And it was Palm Sunday, and it was going to be a huge celebration. And the feast was Passover, the feast of Passover was coming up, and everybody was excited. And the apostles were thinking that when Jesus gets to Jerusalem, he's going to go right into that temple and set up his throne and his kingdom and send the Romans scurrying in every which direction, they will not be able to resist him.

And the kingdom of God is going to come to earth. This, fellas, this is the big picture. This kingdom thing even transcends the concept of the church because it precedes the church.

[10 : 31] And the church is that parenthesis that is sandwiched in between the 69th and the 70th week of Daniel.

And when that is complete, the church is removed, and Israel comes back on track again, and that kingdom will be realized. But there is so much here that is misunderstood today. And it is something that has divided Christendom a lot. Yeah, Joe?

Of course, there was nothing in the Old Testament or anything previous to this that would even indicate that there was anything like the church going to happen. It was a total mystery.

And so why should anybody expect something like that to even happen? There was no indication of it at all. Right. And this is exactly the point that Paul makes in Ephesians 3 when he says that this mystery of the church, which is Jew and Gentile on the same plane, was never made known to the sons of men in the past.

It existed only in the mind of God. Nobody had even a clue that this was going to happen. And yet, when Israel nationally rejected Jesus as their Messiah, that whole kingdom concept was set aside, and something new developed that was, like Joe said, completely unthought of and not prophesied at all.

[11 : 58] It caught Israel flat-footed because, whoa, where did this come from? What do you mean? Jews and Gentiles together on the same plane? Absolutely.

And this was a startling thing. It was a concept that they never imagined because if there was anything that distinguished the Jew from the Gentile, it was their complete separation.

I mean, even like Peter said when he went to the house of Cornelius, the Gentile centurion, he said, you know how that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to be here in your home as a Gentile, and blah, blah, blah, you know.

And that was the breakthrough that started there, and Peter was the instrument that God used for it. So this kingdom thing is such a tremendous... Tremendous. They supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.

But what was the parable he gave them? The parable was about this nobleman who was going to a far country and would not return for a long time to receive what was rightfully his, and he was going to be absent for a long while.

[13 : 11] Well, what Jesus was talking about was himself. He's the one who's going to a far country. He's going to be absent for a long time, but he will return and claim that which belongs to it.

This kingdom concept is so big because it... Well, I've preached this message a couple of times, and I labeled it what everything is all about.

And that is exactly what it is. I mean, all of the stuff that happens, all of the wars, all of the conflicts, all of the deaths, all the illness, all the disease, all of that stuff. Everything, all of it is all wrapped up in this one package, and that has to do with the revitalization and restitution of that kingdom.

So let's come quickly, if we may, from Luke to Acts chapter 3. Acts chapter 3. This is following hard on the heels of Peter's message on the day of Pentecost, which was a very dramatic thing, to say the least, and it was accompanied with the speaking in languages that they had not learned, etc.

But I want you to go to Acts chapter 3, because Peter will have a follow-up message to the message on Pentecost. And you know, he was kind of short-circuited there in Acts 2 when he delivered that message.

[14 : 35] But now he is back again. And the occasion that brings this message forth has to do with this blind man who had been healed, that was at the temple gate, beautiful, and he's healed.

And there's a huge crowd of people there. And this guy had occupied this choice begging spot for years there by the temple, because you catch people that are going in and coming out of the temple, they're likely to be a little more generous, you know.

This guy had dibs on that space. And everybody knew him. Everybody that went to the temple would pass this guy, same guy, they saw him there for years. He'd been lame from his mother's womb, never walked a day in his life.

And Peter and John came upon him and healed him. And this guy gets up, stands up on two legs that he had never stood on in his entire life, and begins walking around and dancing around and looking at his legs.

And people are, the crowd is gathering and everybody's saying, what's going on? Hey, isn't that old so-and-so? Yeah, well, how is it that he's walking? He's been lame, he's been crippled. And it drew a big crowd and everybody's talking.

[15 : 40] And Peter's going to take advantage of this audience. And he does. And when you look at chapter 11, I'm sorry, chapter 3 and verse 11, he was clinging to Peter and John.

That's this man out of gratitude. He's just overwhelmed. All the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement. And he discounts the people's thinking that he and John were responsible for the healing of this man.

And they make it very clear. It was not by any power that we have. It was in and through the name of Jesus that this man stands before you whole. And this had to be one of the most stunning things that these people had ever heard.

And they're standing there with their mouths wide open, looking at this guy and listening to Peter.

And he goes on with his message. And he says in verse 16, And now, brethren, Peter continues, Now, brethren, and by the way, remember, these are all Jews.

There is no way in the world there would be a Gentile here in the audience. This is in the temple. They were not even allowed there. Now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance just as your rulers did also.

[17 : 14] Ignorance about what? Ignorance about Jesus being the Messiah and you're handing him over for crucifixion. And then he says, But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets.

And this, of course, is limited to Old Testament prophets because the New Testament hadn't even begun to be written yet. So he's talking about the Jewish Tanakh.

And the Tanakh in Judaism is the totality of the Bible. That's the whole thing. They do not accept the New Testament as being the Word of God.

And they call the Old Testament the Tanakh. And it consists of the law, the prophets, and the writings. Those three categories make up the whole of the Old Testament, which they consider to be the whole of the Bible.

And this is what he is talking about here. The mouth of all the prophets. Here it is. That his Christ, his Messiah, should suffer.

[18 : 22] He has thus fulfilled. God, through the prophets, predicted that his Christ should suffer. And he has fulfilled that.

Remember when Jesus encountered the disciples on the road to Emmaus. And he said, O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written.

Ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?

What does the Old Testament say about the Messiah's suffering and about his glory? It says a whole lot about both of them. But, it says a whole lot more about his glory than it does about his suffering.

And what am I saying? The glory is associated with Christ's second coming. The suffering is associated with his first coming.

[19 : 21] The problem was, the Jews focused upon the reflection of the Messiah in the prophets, was just the glory stuff.

And they ignored the suffering stuff. Because after all, who wants a Messiah deliverer who's going to suffer? We don't want a suffering Messiah.

We're already suffering. We don't want the Messiah suffering. We want a glorious Messiah. And they're both there. They're both there. But, fellas, never lose sight of this fact.

The second coming of Christ, and what will occur when that happens, is mentioned far more frequently in the Old Testament than is the first coming.

Yeah, we've got Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 and Genesis 3.15 and a lot of other places that do Bethlehem and Micah 5.2 that all predict about his first coming.

[20 : 19] But, fellas, the references that refer to Christ in his second coming greatly outweigh those that refer to his first coming.

Both are essential. But, the Jew just focused upon the one. And when the Messiah comes, he's going to rout the enemy. He's going to establish his kingdom.

Did Jesus do that? No. Ergo, he wasn't the real deal. Because he did not meet the qualifications that they anticipated.

But they ignored the first part. They ignored that first coming. And that created a lot of confusion. And, by the way, this is still the burning issue for Jews today.

Same issue, same question. And that is, is Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah of Israel or was he not? And, of course, you know the official position of Judaism is that he was not.

[21 : 19] And, by the way, I've noted a rather fascinating thing that I think that I've just discovered is just pure puzzling. And that is, I have heard over the years a number of Jews, particularly some well-placed, well-educated Jewish rabbis, who have said things like, we really don't have any problem with Jesus.

We think he was a great rabbi, great moral teacher, and did a lot of good for a lot of people. But, at the same time, how could one be a great moral teacher if he was a flat-out liar and imposter? Because how could someone go around saying, I am the bread of life, I am the light of the world, he who believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live? And how can someone be making statements like that, which you would have to say are completely untrue, and then regard him as a great moral teacher?

Unfortunately, they just really haven't read what Jesus said about himself. But if they had, they would have to hold to their position that, of course, he was not the Messiah at all. And I want you to focus on verse 19 here. In verse 18, the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Messiah should suffer, he has thus fulfilled. [22 : 53] In other words, God has made good on his part of the program. That's over and done with. And then he says, repent therefore.

What's that mean? That means, now it's time for your part, Israel. It's time for your part. God has done his part. Now your part is to repent, which means change your mind. Well, what would they have to change their mind about? They have to change their mind about who Yeshua HaMashiach was. Change your mind from rejecting him as Beelzebul, and rejecting him as the Messiah, and embrace him as the Messiah. That's your part. And he goes on to say, Repent therefore and return that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. And that is a refreshment for the whole globe. And he goes on to say, And that he may send Jesus the Christ appointed for you.

[24 : 06] Well, you know, he'd only left about two months earlier from this time. And now he's saying that God would send him back, conditioned upon what?

Conditioned upon Israel's reversal. Israel's changing their position. And God will send him back and get on with that kingdom business. But fellas, Israel never did do that. And they still haven't done that. And he says, Whom heaven, verse 21, must receive, which is where he is now, until the period of restoration of all things. What is that? That too is global. That's fixing the planet. That is eliminating the disease, and the death, and the war, and all the rest. That is bringing in this kingdom. When men will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the seas. And this is utopia. [25 : 08] This is the millennium. This is heaven on earth. This is the kingdom of heaven come to earth. But fellas, this isn't it. We are not living in this.

We are living in a world that is dominated by the adversary. And this is why three times in John's gospel, 12, 14, and 16, Jesus clearly called Satan the prince of this world. And if you're wondering why the world is the way it is, look at who's running it. And look at who the subjects are. It is a fallen humanity, presided over by a fallen angel. And when that takes place, you get what we've got today. This is where everything is going. This is going to finally be put down, and the kingdom of heaven will come to earth. You know, fellas, this is the essence of that prayer that everybody is so familiar with. It's a prayer for what we're talking about. It is our Father who art in heaven. [26 : 24] Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. That's a prayer for the coming of the kingdom so that thy will will be done.

It isn't now. It isn't now. So that thy will will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And anybody who can fantasize today that that is this world is looking at a different world than I am. This is a fallen world. What we're talking about is a world that enjoys the complete redemption, restoration, restitution that Peter is talking about here in Acts chapter 3. I've gone on long enough. Now, questions or comments from you? Anybody? That prayer you've been there, that's a Jewish prayer. Well, it is. It is a Jewish prayer. It is a Jewish prayer. But it's a, it's, well, I don't want to wax eloquent on that. But anyway, it's, it's the, the repetition of that prayer that, that many put so much, so much confidence in.

[27 : 34] But, and matter of fact, if you look right there in that same context, in the Sermon on the Mount, it's kind of, it's kind of interesting that Jesus chided those who just repeat prayers over and over and over again.

Just kind of automatic, you know. And he kind of debunks that whole idea. And he's saying, prayer is not to be a ritual. It's not to be a recitation. You don't get points for, for voicing some special words over and over again. But prayer is, let me put it this way. Christians ought to pray. We ought not to say prayers. And there's a big difference. Praying from the heart and addressing our Heavenly Father is a lot different than just saying prayers.

And yet, the world doesn't make that distinction and, and you get a lot of shallowness like we've got today. So, other thoughts or comments? Anyone? Yeah. Dana?

[28 : 41] I don't think you need any coffee. I'm sorry? I don't think you need coffee. Oh, well. Okay. Yes?

Those Orthodox Jews and Jews back then, you mentioned writings in addition to the Old Testament there. That's what they were following. They weren't following in the inspiration of God, the law. They weren't really following the law. They were man's interpretation. Oh yeah. That was their whole trouble and Jesus was trying to point that out to them. Exactly. That was a big, big problem. And, I don't know, I know, I know some of you are familiar with Israel My Glory, a publication from Friends of Israel, a great magazine. But, Zvi Kalischer, he's with the Lord now, but he was converted to Christianity as a young Jew.

He was born, I think, in Ukraine. Came to know the Lord and he had a tremendous ministry among his own people there in Israel. And he fought, by the way, in both of the 67 to 73 wars and the War of Independence.

[29 : 45] And, he would confront his fellow Jews with the gospel and, of course, it involved a lot of arguments and everything. But, he continually had to deal with their trust in the rabbis and the writings of the rabbis as opposed to the pure word of God.

And, it's remarkable how they, they go to the Mishnah and the Gemara and these are commentaries that Jews have written on the scriptures and apparently it never occurred to them that many of these rabbis that they read and quote so profusely, apart from the scriptures, that many of those rabbis disagreed among themselves.

So, how in the world are you supposed to know which one to go with? And, the, the great problem is that, well, let me put it this way. There are things that God says in the Bible and there are things that man says that God says in the Bible and they can be miles apart.

And, we get a lot of that today. It's, and it's been a problem ever since. So, this is why we have to repair to and have confidence in simply the word of God as it is.

And, all of the additional writings and commentaries, hey, I've got shelves and shelves full of some of my best friends and they are books and they are contributions that many great men of God had made in explaining the word of God over the years and I know as I've consulted them over the last 60 years how much in disagreement they are among themselves regarding a lot of these issues.

[31 : 35] But, at least, it helps you to coordinate your thoughts and to get somebody else's mind on the thing. So, I remember interesting anecdote that Spurgeon had years ago and he was teaching a group of young men and by the way, Spurgeon was never formally educated himself but he had great confidence in education and he was teaching this class to a group of would-be preachers.

This had been probably in the 1860s or 70s and one young man raised his hand and he said, Sir, isn't it true that we don't need any commentaries or any writings by men that all we need is just the word of God?

And Spurgeon said, well, it is amazing how much value some place in their own conclusions about scripture and how little value they place in what others have reached about scripture.

Kind of put it in perspective. So, someone said, I think it was, I think it was, oh, what's his name? Wiersbe, Warren Wiersbe. Warren Wiersbe said, he's a great commentator, wrote a lot of, you know, man was a prolific writer but he said, I milk a lot of cows but I churn my own butter.

[33 : 04] You know, that's what, that's what, that's what preachers are supposed to be doing. You know, you tap into a lot of resources, a lot of contributions that a lot have made. for the last 2,000 years but you distill it and when you finish it's yours and you churn your own butter but we can be grateful that we have shoulders of giants to stand on who have made great contributions to us in the past.

Yeah. Gary? Yeah, are the believers who make it into the kingdom of heaven, are they expected to have eternal life? Well, there will be two kinds of people who will enter the kingdom of heaven.

One will of course be believers in glorified bodies and the others will be believers just like us today with these bodies and they will, I do not think, and I can't, I'm not ready to die on this hill, but I do not think there will be any unbelievers, glorified body or not, who will enter the kingdom.

I think they will all be believers, either regenerated or glorified bodies, but these with regular bodies just like we've got will reproduce and they will have children and they will be born just like we are.

But the atmosphere and the health issues and everything will be radically different. So, during the kingdom period, it says that one will be thought who lives, who dies at 100 years, who dies at 100 years of age will be thought to be a child.

[34 : 45] Well, that's kind of reminiscent to the pre-flood days, you know, and the longevity of life with Methuselah and those people. So, what's going to happen is that during the thousand year reign of Christ, with all of these believers with bodies like ours entering into that kingdom period under the authority of Christ, they are going to be reproducing.

And at the end of a thousand years, The devil is released. Yeah. At the end of a thousand years, Satan will be released from that bottomless pit. And how many people will you get if people have been reproducing under what we would consider ideal conditions for a thousand years?

How many people are you going to have? A lot. You're going to have a lot. You're going to have a lot because remember, there were only 70 souls that went down into Egypt. And after being there for 400 to 430 years, they came out numbering around 2 million.

And we may look at that number and say, well, that sounds kind of exaggerated. But fellas, if you do the math, it's not exaggerated at all. It's right on. So there's going to be a huge number of people as a result of the thousand year reign and Satan being loosed.

And that is simply going to be the final onslaught because he will go out to deceive these people and many will follow him. And this time, there will not be an Armageddon.

[36 : 13] They'll be dealt with summarily in Revelation chapter 20 and it's not a pretty picture.

Yeah, Roger? Do you think there will be a difference between the way the kingdom is run and the paradise that we set up without a need?

Well, we have a number of things that describe how that kingdom is going to be. We know it will be a righteous kingdom. We know that everything will be equitable.

Christ is going to rule with a rod of iron. And that's another way of saying he's going to rule in such a way that there won't be any nonsense. He's going to rule with a rod of iron. And the world will be what it ought to be.

And he will be reigning and David, the vice regent, will be reigning under him and the 12 tribes will be governed by the 12 apostles just like Christ said. So it's, that's, guys, this is what everything is all about.

It is this restoration. It is a return. It is fixing of a broken world. And my estimation is, and I can't be firm about this, but I think then after that final, final disposition of the enemy there in Revelation 20, then we enter the eternal state and apparently it's a kind of continuation of the millennial kingdom and it will be, well, let me put it this way.

[37 : 36] Heaven and the eternal state will be as great, as good, and as wonderful as God can make it. How good is that? And no tears and none of that nonsense that we deal with now.

Yeah, Rod? So the millennial will not be the age of innocence that there was before the fall. I mean, there will be people doing things and being corrected for. Well, yeah, there will be, yeah, there, yeah.

In order, for the expression to rule with a rod of iron, I think implies that they're going to be infractions. They're going to be pockets or degrees of lawlessness, but apparently I think they're going to be dealt with quite summarily and they will be dealt with with perfect, absolute justice so that whatever the crime is, the sentence will be what it ought to be.

We have great difficulty today with our justice system, you know. We either slap them on the wrist when they should go to jail or we put them in jail for 80 years when they should be in for five or something.

But Christ will be the judge then and it will be what it ought to be. Hey guys, I appreciate you being here. Thank you. Enjoy your breakfast. And next week we will return to our consideration of the minor prophets and we're working closer and closer to more prophetic pictures.

[38 : 55] so we'll be undertaking Zephaniah. That's Zephaniah, not Zechariah, but Zephaniah next week.