

The Twelve Minor Prophets

Commentary for September 1, 2012 — One Message Out of Many

The Twelve Minor Prophets are the subject of this month's presentation by Dr. Ernest L. Martin titled "The Minor Prophets for Today." Read first the "[September 2012 Newsletter](#)." This presentation is the introduction and the first of 14 lectures on the Minor Prophets. These will be presented in future months in transcribed, written, and expanded form. I also expand the material and add to each of Dr. Martin's presentations with relevant information.

ASK has available Dr. Martin's 14 lectures in a set of CDs for sale for \$59.95, over 14 hours of straightforward biblical teaching without theological bias. These CDs are only available in the United States and not in Canada or elsewhere outside the United States. These presentations were recorded beginning in 1996, then one each month.

The set is comprised of this month's "The Minor Prophets for Today," then one presentation by Dr. Martin for each of the books of the Minor Prophets. For the Book of Jonah Dr. Martin gave two presentations because the Book of Jonah has special relevance to Christ's resurrection, as well as being an example of waiting for delayed fulfillment of prophetic judgment.

Dr. Martin relates these books of the "Minor Prophets" to other parts of the Bible as examples of the extensive interplay among and between the texts of the Old Testament. The witnesses given by the Books of the Twelve exhibit surprising intertextuality with the rest of the Bible. Added to that is the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament with a full range of direct quotations, references, and even slight allusions from the Old in the New. Many of those texts come from the Book of the Twelve. Let me give you an example.

Look at Acts 15:15 which introduces a conference that took place in Jerusalem to discuss the work of God with Gentile believers begun by Peter and expanded greatly by the apostles Paul and Barnabas. James the half-brother of Jesus, as the leader of the Jerusalem *ekklesia*, convened the meeting and summed up the conclusions of the speakers.

James said: "**And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written ...**" (Acts 15:15). James then quoted Amos 9:11–15 (one of the Twelve Minor Prophetic books) regarding Christ's obvious recognition of Gentiles who were being incorporated into the *ekklesia* of God. James seemingly changed the text of Amos:

<p style="text-align: center;">Amos 9:11–15 (Concordant Version, <u>from the Hebrew</u>)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Acts 15:16–17 (Concordant Version, <u>from the Greek</u>)</p>
<p>"In that day will I <u>raise up the fallen booth of David,</u> and I will dike with stones <u>its breaches,</u> and its <u>demolished places will I raise,</u></p>	<p>"After these things I will turn back, And I will <u>rebuild the tabernacle of David</u> which has fallen... And its <u>overturned structure will I rebuild,</u></p>

<p>and <u>I will build it</u> as in the days of the eon, that they may tenant <u>the remnant of EDOM,</u></p> <p>and <u>all the nations</u> over <u>whom My name is called,</u> (averring is YHWH the Doer of this).</p>	<p>And <u>I will re-erect it...</u></p> <p>So that those <u>left of mankind</u> should ever be seeking out the Lord, And <u>all the nations,</u> on them <u>over whom My name is invoked,</u> Is saying the Lord, Who is doing these things.</p>
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Notice how the text changed "Edom" in Amos 9:12 to "mankind" (Concordant Version and several other English translations) or "men" (King James Version) in Acts 15:17. In Hebrew these would be two radically different words, having no relationship to one another in any sense. The word for mankind in the Greek of Acts 15:17 is *ανθρωπων*, plural, which refers to corporate mankind. The text in the Greek (Old Testament) Septuagint translation for Amos 9:12 is also *ανθρωπων*. Jewish scholars generally reject the Septuagint as having any bearing on the meaning of a text. Yet James accepted the Septuagint usage. Occasionally the New Testament authors accept the Septuagint translation, other times they reject it.

The Hebrew text is clear, so is the Greek text of the Septuagint, as is the Greek text of Acts. James uses *ανθρωπων* to convey the message about the Gentiles and their connection to the Jewish *ekklesias*. James had the authority to make his textual decision. He did it because he felt the Septuagint text truly represented the message Amos 9:12 was trying to convey.

Is the Hebrew text with Edom correct? Yes, it is. Is James using the Septuagint text when he cited Amos 9:12 (the LXX)? Yes. Can James make that decision? Yes. Jesus gave His apostles (and the New Testament writers) such authority (Matthew 16:19, 18:18–20). Remember, they lived with Christ for the 2½ years of His ministry, and at the end He taught them the meaning of the prophecies regarding Himself (Luke 24:44–47) — except the prophecies about His return. They made errors on that subject.

God's dealings with the Gentiles was one issue that needed to be resolved. Christ spoke His last words to His apostles just before He ascended into heaven:

"And he said unto them, 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, ... But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost [Spirit] is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.' And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

• Acts 1:7–9

I used this example from Amos and Acts to show how New and Old Testament books could interact. The Twelve Minor Prophets need to be studied carefully to fully discover the nuances in Hebrew and Old Testament texts in translation. The Book of Amos, with its mention of Edom, coordinates and links with the short Book of Obadiah which is also about Edom. Yet James, with full authority to do so, accepted the changed text of Amos from the Septuagint. Both the text of Amos in Hebrew and the Greek translation of Amos in Acts are correct. God cares about the details in His Word.

David Sielaff
david@askelm.com