

10-1986

Four Angry Prophets

Harold Willmington

Liberty University, hwillmington@liberty.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/will_articles

Recommended Citation

Willmington, Harold, "Four Angry Prophets" (1986). *Articles*. 5.
https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/will_articles/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Willmington School of the Bible at Scholars Crossing. It has been accepted for inclusion in Articles by an authorized administrator of Scholars Crossing. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu.

Four Angry Prophets

by Harold Willmington

Shape up or be shipped out! Revival or ruin, which would it be? Here are the stories of four angry prophets of God—Amos, Obadiah, Joel, and Hosea.

Amos. "No, I'm not a prophet! No, I'm not the son of a prophet! It's true. I'm just a fruit-picker and flock-tender. But I'll tell you something. Even though a lowly layman, I'm far more qualified to speak for God than are you, a professional priest!"

This little confrontation took place around 760 B.C. in the Northern Kingdom city of Bethel. The speaker was Amos, and his angry listener, Amaziah, was the faithless priest of Bethel. Amaziah had started the whole episode by his efforts to muzzle Amos. It was like attempting to silence an electrical storm! No other writing prophet so thundered away at sin, righteousness, and judgment as did Amos. Before he finished, Jews, Gentiles, laymen, and leaders were boldly denounced. Justice had been spurned. Judgment would fall. Four terrible visions spoke of this. But after the fury of the storm abated, the glory of the Lord would appear. Israel would be redeemed, regathered, and restored to the land!

Obadiah. Imagine that your city had been surrounded by a brutal enemy. One dark night you manage to escape, and you find yourself out of danger, at least for a moment. Suddenly out of the darkness an unknown enemy pounces on you and drags you back to the city to be sold into slavery by your original captors. Only in the morning light are you aware that the heartless bounty hunter is your own cousin! This is the story of Obadiah.

***The earth would quake,
stars would fall,
blood would flow,
and men would die.
But after the night,
the glorious light
would come.***

The enemy was Assyria; the victims, the Israelites; and the bounty hunters, the Edomites. Both Edom and Israel were related, being descendants of Jacob.

Joel. Joel had never seen anything like it before. The old men had never seen anything like it before. The land of Judah had never seen anything like it before. Uncounted millions of fast-moving locusts with ferocious appetites stripped the land. Scarcely a green blade of anything was left. At the prophet's command, a public meeting was called to allow the Israel of God to cry out to the God of Israel. Perhaps heaven would respond, if not by salvation, at least by explanation. Why was this happening to them? The divine answer was immediate. The terrible locust plague occurred to accomplish a twofold purpose—punishment and prophecy. Judah's sin demanded Jehovah's punishment. But what of the prophecy? God used the locust plague as an illustration to preview the future calamity when enemy troops would invade Judah—much like the locusts had

done. The earth would quake, stars would fall, blood would flow, and men would die. But after the grievous night, the glorious light would come. God's spirit would descend upon the chosen, and God's Son would rule.

Hosea. Some were sympathetic, others displayed indifference, but many were openly critical. After all, he had asked for it. What could have possibly possessed any sensible man, especially a man of God as was he, to knowingly marry a harlot? The whole matter was simply incredible and inexcusable! None, of course, could know God Himself had ordered him to marry her. So, in quiet obedience, Hosea, the man of God, took Gomer, the harlot, as his wife. Even before the birth of their third child the marriage had deteriorated. Gomer, the harlot before marriage, soon became an adulteress after marriage. But why would a sovereign God require His prophet to suffer such an ordeal? Slowly the truth dawned upon the heartbroken husband. God desired that Hosea understand in some small measure the agony He was enduring over the unfaithfulness of Israel, His chosen wife! And what of the three children? Their very names would serve as a prophetic summary of the total relationship between Jehovah and Judah. What terrible names they bore—"scattered," "unpitied," and "not my people."

Did Hosea and Gomer eventually reconcile? We cannot say. God's goodness might suggest they did. Will God and Israel eventually reconcile? Israel will indeed be cleansed and restored. "Scattered" will become "gathered," "unpitied" will be "full of pity," and "not my people" will become "my beloved people." ■