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MINOR
PROPHETS

The Prophetical Books of the Old Testament

Prophets were men raised up of God in times of declension and apostasy in Israel. They were primarily revivalists and patriots, speaking on behalf of God to the heart and conscience of the nation. The prophetic messages have a twofold character: first, that which was local and for the prophet's time; secondly, that which was predictive of the divine purpose in future.

The terms **Major Prophets** and **Minor Prophets** are simply a way to divide these books.

The **Major Prophets** are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

The **Minor Prophets** are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The Minor Prophets are also sometimes called *The Twelve*.

The Major Prophets are described as "major" because their books are longer and their content has broad, even global implications. The Minor Prophets are described as "minor" because their books are shorter (although Hosea and Zechariah are almost as long as Daniel) and the content is more narrowly focused. That does not mean the Minor Prophets are any less inspired than the Major Prophets. It is simply a matter of God choosing to reveal more to the Major Prophets than He did to the Minor Prophets.

Both the Major and Minor Prophets are usually among the least popular books of the Bible for Christians to read. This is understandable with the often unusual prophetic language and the seemingly constant warnings and condemnations recorded in the prophecies. Still, there is much valuable content to be studied in the Major and Minor Prophets. We read of Christ's birth in Isaiah and Micah. We learn of Christ's atoning sacrifice in Isaiah. We read of Christ's return in Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah. We learn of God's holiness, wrath, grace, and mercy in all of the Major and Minor Prophets. For that, they are most worthy of our attention and study.

Chronological Order of the Prophets

I. Prophets Before the Exile

(1) To Nineveh Jonah, 862 B.C.

(2) To the 10 tribes "Israel" Amos, 787 B.C. Hosea, 785-725 B.C. Obadiah, 887 B.C. Joel, 800 B.C.

(3) To Judah Isaiah, 760-698 B.C. Micah, 750-710 B.C. Nahum, 713 B.C. Habakkuk, 626 B.C. Zephaniah, 630 B.C.

II. Prophets During the Exile

Ezekiel, 595-574 B.C. Daniel, 607-534 B.C.

III. Prophets After the Exile

Haggai, 520 B.C. Zechariah, 520-518 B.C. Malachi, 397 B.C.

The Minor Prophets

The division of *major* and *minor* prophets come from the Old Testament. There are 17 books of prophecy in the Old Testament and they are divided into two groups: the long books (the major prophets) and the short books (the minor prophets).

The Minor Prophet books are:

1. **Hosea**
2. **Joel**
3. **Amos**
4. **Obadiah**
5. **Jonah**
6. **Micah**
7. **Nahum**
8. **Habakkuk**
9. **Zephaniah**
10. **Haggai**
11. **Zechariah**
12. **Malachi**

Minor Prophets--12 books

1. **Hosea**--Story of Hosea and his unfaithful wife, Gomer. Represents God's love and faithfulness and Israel's spiritual adultery. Israel will be judged and restored.
2. **Joel**--Proclaims a terrifying future using the imagery of locusts. Judgment will come, but blessing will follow.
3. **Amos**--He warned Israel of its coming judgment. Israel rejects God's warning.
4. **Obadiah**--A decree against Edom, a neighboring nation of Israel that gloated over Jerusalem's judgments. Prophecy of its utter destruction.
5. **Jonah**--Jonah proclaims a coming judgment upon Nineveh's people, but they repented and judgment was spared.
6. **Micah**--Description of the complete moral decay in all levels of Israel. God will judge but will forgive and restore.
7. **Nahum**--Nineveh has gone into apostasy (approx. 125 years after Jonah) and will be destroyed.
8. **Habakkuk**--Near the end of the kingdom of Judah, Habakkuk asks God why He is not dealing with Judah's sins. God says He will use the Babylonians. Habakkuk asks how God can use a nation that is even worse than Judah.
9. **Zephaniah**--The theme is developed of the Day of the Lord and His judgment with a coming blessing. Judah will not repent except for a remnant, which will be restored.
10. **Haggai**--The people failed to put God first by building their houses before they finished God's temple. Therefore, they had no prosperity.
11. **Zechariah**--Zechariah encourages the Jews to complete the temple. Many messianic prophecies.
12. **Malachi**--God's people are negligent in their duty to God. Growing distant from God. Moral compromise. Proclamation of coming judgment.

The Minor Prophets

Books and Themes

1. Hosea (14)	- <u>Spiritual Adultery</u>	Key Verse 1:2
2. Joel (3)	- <u>The Day of the LORD</u>	Key Verse 1:15
3. Amos (9)	- <u>National Accountability</u>	Key Verse 4:12
4. Obadiah (1)	- <u>The Destruction of Edom</u>	Key Verse 1:10
5. Jonah (4)	- <u>Obedience</u>	Key Verse 1:3
6. Micah (7)	- <u>Purest Religion</u>	Key Verse 5:2
7. Nahum (3)	- <u>The Destruction of Nineveh</u>	Key Verse 2:13
8. Habakkuk (3)	- <u>The Mystery of Providence</u>	Key Verse 1:5
9. Zephaniah (3)	- <u>God's Searching Judgment</u>	Key Verse 1:12
10. Haggai (2)	- <u>Working for God First</u>	Key Verse 2:4
11. Zechariah (14)	- <u>The Hope of the Future</u>	Key Verse 1:3
12. Malachi (3)	- <u>Ignorant Opposition</u>	Key Verse 3:16



AUTHOR

- Amos -- His name means "**burden-bearer**." (1:1)
- **He was not trained in the school of the prophets, but was a herdsman of Tekoa**, a wilderness region west of the Dead Sea. (7:14-15)
- He prophesied in Israel, but was a native of Judah.

DATE

- This book was written ca. 765-755 B.C.
- Amos preached when Israel was at the zenith of her power (6:1). His ministry was just before that of Hosea.

THEME

" JUDGMENT FOR ABUSED PRIVILEGE "

- I. The **Privilege** of the People
 - *With great privilege comes great responsibility. Israel was privileged above all others (3:1-2).
- II. The **Promise** of Judgment
 - *Because Israel rejected God's Word sent through His prophets, God would send the fire of His judgment! (2:11-12; 4:2, 12; 5:21-27)
 - *This is pictured clearly in the vision of the plumbline. Israel did not meet God's divine standard (7:7-9).
- III. The **Prospect** of Restoration
 - *In the future kingdom, Christ will restore Israel "*as in the days of old.*" (9:11-15)

OUTLINE

- I. Eight "Burdens" (ch. 1-2)
- II. Three Sermons (ch. 3-6)
- III. Five "Visions" (ch. 7-9)

KEY VERSE

"Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

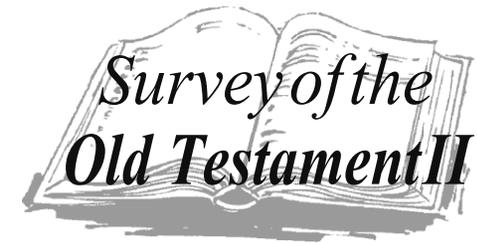
Amos 4:12

SPECIAL FEATURES

- The phrase "**thus saith the LORD**" occurs 40 times in this book. Amos spoke with authority, the authority of the Word of God.
- One narrative passage in the book shows us a great deal about Amos (7:10-17).
 1. His **Call** -- "*the LORD took me*"
 2. His **Courage** -- "*hear thou the word of the LORD*"
 3. His **Conviction** - "*thus saith the LORD...*"

CHRIST IN THE BOOK

- Amos himself pictures Christ.
 - *He was of lowly birth. He depended wholly on God's Word. He was charged with treason. He suffered reproach from religious leaders.



AUTHOR

- Obadiah - means "**worshiper or servant of Jehovah**"
- This was a common Hebrew name and is found many times in the Bible, but this is the only reference to this particular prophet.
- Obadiah is known as "**the prophet of poetic justice.**"

DATE

- This book was written ca. 597 B.C., just a few years before the final destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. (See Psalm 137:7.)

THEME

"THE EVTLs OF EDOM"

- This book is about judgment on Edom, a hostile kingdom in a rugged region called Mt. Seir, southeast of Judah.
- The **Edomites**, descendants of Esau, were antagonistic toward their brother, Jacob (the nation of Judah).
- There are two great truths emphasized:
 - I. *"Pride goeth before destruction."* (Prov. 16:18)
 - *Although Edom had many evils, at the root of them all was pride. (vs. 3a)
 - *Edom's pride gave them a false sense of security. (vs. 3-4)
 - II. *"whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."* (Gal. 6:7)
 - *As Edom had treated Judah with cruelty, so she would be judged cruelly. (vs. 9-10, 15-16)

OUTLINE

- I. The Destruction of Edom (vs. 1-16)
- II. The Salvation of Israel (vs. 17-21)

KEY VERSE

"The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?"

Obadiah 3

SPECIAL FEATURES

- The capital city of Edom was Sela, or **Petra**. This was considered to be an "impregnable" fortress. It was built within the rocks of a canyon in the mountains of Seir.
- The people of Edom**, like their father Esau, were marked by a hardy earthiness. They were proud, profane, fierce, and cruel.
- Edom typifies the "natural man" & the "self-life."**
Notice how the description of this carnal nation parallels the life of a carnal man.

CHRIST IN THE BOOK

- Christ is the "**LORD**" of the "*kingdom*" - vs. 21
 - *He will destroy His enemies.
 - *He will reign in Mt. Zion.
 - *He will restore the nation of Israel.

RECOMMENDED READING & RESOURCES

Exploring the Scriptures, by John Phillips

Explore the Book, by J. Sidlow Baxter

Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament, by Irving L. Jensen

The Prophets of Israel, by Leon J. Wood

The Treasury of David (Book of Psalms), by C.H. Spurgeon

Our God and His Children (Psalm 1-13), by Clarence Sexton

His Way Is Perfect (Psalm 14-24), by Clarence Sexton

The Lord Is my Shepherd (Psalm 23), by Clarence Sexton

The Glory Due His Name (Psalm 25-37), by Clarence Sexton

The Conclusion of the Whole Matter - Vols. 1,2 (Ecclesiastes), by Clarence Sexton

Door of Hope (Hosea), by Clarence Sexton

Lord, Send a Revival (Habakkuk), by Clarence Sexton

World's Bible Handbook, by Robert T. Boyd

Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, by Merrill C. Tenney

Baker's Bible Atlas, by Charles F. Pfeiffer