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MINOR
PROPHETS

The Prophetic 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**

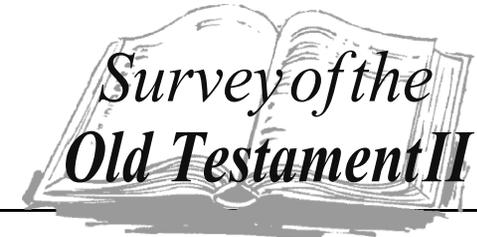
Minor Prophets--12 books

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

- Zechariah - His name means "**the LORD remembers.**"
- His lineage given in 1:1 reveals that he was a **priest.**
- He was called to be a prophet just two months after Haggai (compare Haggai 1:1 & Zechariah 1:1).

DATE

- It is likely that chapters 1-8 were written during the temple construction (520-516 B.C.) and chapters 9-14 were written after the temple's completion.

THEME

"My HOUSE SHALL BE BUILT"

- Zechariah is the companion prophet of **Haggai**. Both preached to stir the remnant to rebuild the temple.
- This book is a message of great encouragement. It shows how the people could complete the work:
 1. God's **favor was** upon them. (1:14, 16; 2:8)
 2. God's **presence** was with them. (2:10-12)
 3. God's **power** was upon them. (4:6)
 4. God's **promises** were extended to them. (8:1-8)

*If the remnant had believed these things, they would never have stopped building in the first place!

OUTLINE

- I. Early Prophecies: Temple being rebuilt (ch. 1-8)
- II. Later Prophecies: After temple rebuilt (ch. 9-14)

KEY VERSE

"Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

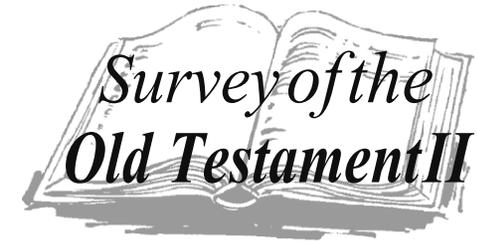
Zechariah 4:6

SPECIAL FEATURES

- This book is the **longest** of the Minor Prophets.
- There are at least 7 different visions in the book. These are not visions of judgment. Each one was meant to be an encouragement to the Jews.
- The phrase, "**the LORD of hosts**" is found 52 times in the book. This title means, "the God of all the armies of heaven."

CHRIST IN THE BOOK

- There are more prophecies of **Christ** in Zechariah than any other book except Isaiah. For example:
 1. The **Branch** (3:8)
 2. **Priest & King** (6:13)
 3. The **pierced** One (12:10)
 4. The smitten **Shepherd** (13:7)
 5. **King** of all the earth (14:9)



AUTHOR

- Malachi - his name means "*messenger of Jehovah*."
- He was a contemporary of Nehemiah.
- He was the last prophetic voice of the Old Testament.
*After Malachi, the voice of prophecy was silenced for about **400** years.

DATE

- The book was most likely written ca. 430-397 B.C.
*This was after the time of Nehemiah's governorship and about 85 years after Haggai & Zechariah.

THEME

"FINAL APPEALS & FINAL PROMISES"

- After the reforms under Nehemiah, the Jews once again fell into sin. It is sad to see what little progress they made since their beginning (1500 years earlier, Gen. 12).
- The remnant had been back in Canaan for 100 years. They had become indifferent to God's promise. Their religious life was characterized by hypocritical formalism and irreverence.

I. Final Appeals

- *Sin of the future Pharisees - formalism/hypocrisy (2:1-3)
- *Sin of the future Sadducees - skepticism (notice the eight sarcastic questions in the book)

II. Final Promises (3:16-18)

- *God promised to remember those that fear Him

OUTLINE

- I. An Appeal - in view of present sin (ch. 1-2)
- II. An Appeal - in view of the coming "day" (ch.3-4)

KEY VERSE

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."

Malachi 3:1

SPECIAL FEATURES

- This book is a **conclusion** to the O.T. (4:4) and a **connection** to the N.T. (4:5-6).
- The "**Elijah**" of 4:5-6 is John the Baptist (Lk. 1:13-17).
- In this book, the people say, "*Ye say...*" eleven times; Malachi answers, "*Thus saith the LORD...*" 25 times.

CHRIST IN THE BOOK

- Christ is the **Messenger** of the covenant. (3:1)
- Christ is the **Refiner** and Purifier. (3:3)
- Christ is the Sun of **Righteousness** with healing in His wings. (4:2)

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