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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**

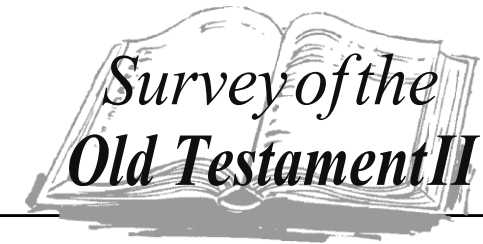
Minor Prophets--12 books

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

- Hosea - He is the prophet of Israel's zero hour.
- He was primarily a prophet to the _____ kingdom, Israel, and he was ministering when Israel was conquered by _____ (722 B.C.)

DATE

- Hosea's ministry took place ca. 754-714 B.C.
- This was a time of unprecedented spiritual darkness and political unrest in Israel. The historical setting is found in II Kings 15-17.

THEME

" _____ ISRAEL & HER _____ God "

- In chapters 1-3 we read of tragedy in Hosea's marriage. His wife, _____, went into adultery and harlotry. Hosea was outraged, yet he continued to love her, and, eventually redeemed her back to himself.
- Hosea's persevering love served as a picture of Jehovah's undying love for Israel. She had gone after other gods and was guilty of spiritual adultery. She had been unfaithful, but God had remained faithful to her.
- *As _____ had sinned against the love of _____, so _____ had sinned against the love of _____. Israel had sinned not only against God's law, but also against God's love!*

OUTLINE

- I. The Prologue, a Symbolic Story (ch. 1-3)
- II. Israel's Sin Intolerable: God Is _____ (ch. 4-7)
- III. Israel Shall Be Punished: God Is _____ (ch. 8-10)
- IV. Israel Shall Be Restored: God Is _____ (ch. 11-14)

KEY VERSE

"Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land."

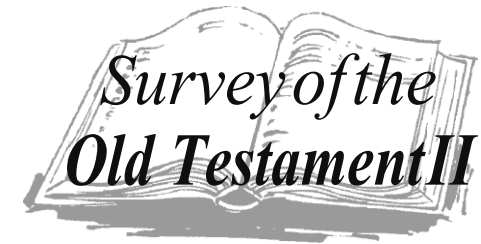
Hosea 4:1

SPECIAL FEATURES

- Hosea often uses " _____ " to refer to the entire northern kingdom because it was the largest of the ten tribes.
- Hosea was contemporary with Isaiah and Micah. They were prophets to Judah, the southern kingdom, while Hosea was a prophet to Israel, the northern kingdom.

CHRIST IN THE BOOK

- Hosea pictures Christ in that he suffered over sin, he loved the unlovely, and he went after the one in sin to redeem that one back to himself



AUTHOR

- Joel - his name means " *is God*"
- He was a prophet primarily to Judah during the reign of King

DATE

- This book was written ca. 835-796 B.C.
- Many believe Joel to be the oldest of the writing prophets. He may have known Elijah & Elisha.

THEME

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The phrase "*day of the LORD*" is used times in the O.T., five times in this book. It refers to two distinct "days":

1. The "*Day of the LORD*"
-In Joel's day, this was an invasion of locusts (1:1-7; 2:1-11)
2. The **Impending** "*Day of the LORD*"
-This is when God will judge all Gentile nations and restore Judah & Jerusalem (2:28-3:21)

- The first "*day of the LORD*" was literally fulfilled, and the second will be also!

OUTLINE

- I. An Alarm - Invasion by Plague (1:1-2:11)
- II. An Appeal - Eleventh-hour Hope (2:12-27)
- III. An Annex - On the After Days (2:28-3:21)

KEY VERSE

"And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."

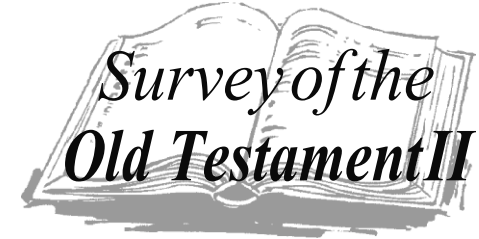
Joel 2:13

SPECIAL FEATURES

- Joel is the "prophet of the ."
-This book includes 25 references to the Books of Moses.
-The invasion of locusts had been foretold by Moses (Deut. 28:38-39)
- Joel is also called the "prophet of ."
-Acts 2:14-21 is a partial fulfillment of Joel 2:28-29.
(Note: The perfect/complete fulfillment will be during the end times.)

CHRIST IN THE BOOK

- As Joel promised the coming of the Spirit, so did Christ (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:13)
- Compare Joel 3:16 and John 3:16 -- Christ is the Saviour and Hope in both!



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