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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**

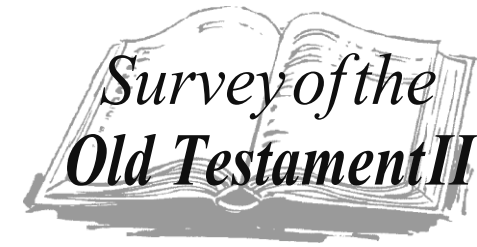
Minor Prophets--12 books

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

- Nahum - very little is known of his personal life
- He was a prophet of **Judah**, but this book gives prophecy concerning the capital city of the Assyrian empire, **Nineveh**.

DATE

- This book was written ca. 663-612 B.C. At the beginning of Nahum's ministry, **Nineveh** was the world's greatest city and Assyria was the dominating world empire.

THEME

"GOD WILL JUDGE THE SINFUL & SPARE THE RIGHTEOUS"

- This entire book is a pronouncement of judgment upon **Nineveh**. The prophesies in this book were fulfilled in detail when Nineveh was utterly destroyed in 612 B.C.

I. **Judgment** to the Wicked - (see 1:2-6)

- Those who spurn the mercy of God will ultimately face the wrath of God -- *"The LORD... will not at all acquit the wicked."* (1:3)

II. **Comfort** to the Godly - (see 1:7)

- It is a comfort to know that evil-doers, in the end, will certainly be brought to justice by the righteous government of God.

OUTLINE

- I. The Certainty of Nineveh's Overthrow (ch. 1)
- II. The Siege and Capture of the City (ch. 2)
- III. The Wickedness Which Provokes Retribution (ch. 3)

KEY VERSE

"God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies."

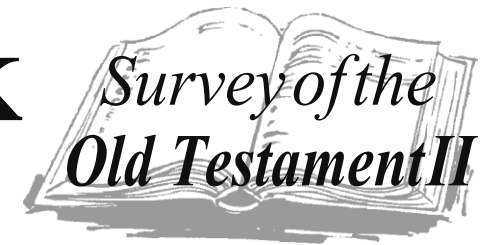
Nahum 1:2

SPECIAL FEATURES

- Two books in the Minor Prophets deal with Nineveh - **Jonah & Nahum**.
 - *In Jonah's day, Nineveh was called to repentance and God sent revival.
 - *About 100 years later in Nahum's day, Nineveh was called to **judgment** and God **destroyed** them.
- Nineveh serves as a two-fold object lesson:
 1. A lesson for the present - godless kingdoms will fall
 2. A lesson for the future - Christ will judge all nations

CHRIST IN THE BOOK

- Christ is our Stronghold. (1:7)
- Christ is the Bringer of good tidings and peace. (1:15)



AUTHOR

- Habakkuk - his name means "**one who embraces**"
- He was contemporary with Jeremiah

DATE

- This book was written ca. 622-605 B.C.
- Babylon's first siege of Jerusalem was in 605 B.C.
Jerusalem was fully destroyed in 586 B.C.

THEME

"**THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH**"

- This book is the record of a conversation between the Lord and the prophet Habakkuk as God reveals to him that judgment on Judah is at hand.

I. Ch. 1 - Habakkuk was a **man with a burden**.

- He desired for God to work in his nation.

II. Ch. 2 - Habakkuk **waited for God to answer**.

- The Lord said He would judge Judah & also Babylon.

III. Ch. 3 - Habakkuk **prays for revival and praises God**.

- He knew judgment was inevitable, yet he sought God for revival and rejoiced in the Lord.
- How did this prophet move from a burden to a blessing, from sobbing to singing? The answer is in the heart of the book--it is "*by faith*" (2:4).

OUTLINE

- I. A "Burden" (ch. 1)
- II. A "Vision" (ch. 2)
- III. A "Prayer" (ch. 3)

KEY VERSE

*"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him:
but the just shall live by his faith."*

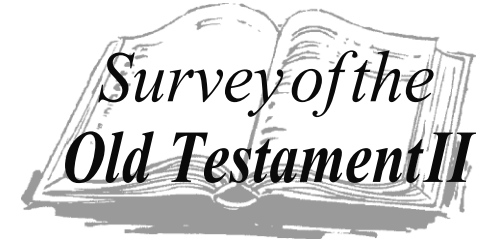
Habakkuk 2:4

SPECIAL FEATURES

- Habakkuk 2:4 is quoted three times in the N.T. --
Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, & Hebrews 10:38
- The nation of Israel had three great enemies of long ago --
the Edomites, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians.
 1. Obadiah - seals the fate of Edom
 2. Nahum - prophesies the destruction of Assyria
 3. Habakkuk - shows the judgment coming to Babylon

CHRIST IN THE BOOK

- Christ is the One who justifies by faith (2:4)
*See Acts 13:38-39 & Galatians 2:16.
- Christ is the God of our salvation. (3:18)



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