



HMR Men's Neighborhood Bible Study - Prophecy Series

Lesson #10: In-depth Assessment of the Minor Prophets

Tuesday, May 19, 2020

The Old Testament prophets played a central role in communicating God's truths to the nation of Israel. In the English Bible the prophets are divided into two groups: Minor Prophets and Major Prophets. As we have discussed before, the Minor Prophets are only "minor" because of the volume of their writings, not because the message they conveyed was insignificant. Listed below are the 12 Minor Prophets. Provided in **Table 1** is a listing of the prophets in terms of their dates of writing and to whom they spoke.

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

Ultimately, the prophetic office found its origin in God's purpose for Israel as a nation through whom all the nations would be blessed. When God gave Israel the Law, He promised them that if they would be obedient, they would become "My own possession" (a special treasure of His) for the purpose of becoming a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" among all the nations (Compare Exodus 19:5-6 with Deuteronomy 4:6-8). However, this promise would never be fulfilled if they followed the beliefs and ways of other pagan nations. In preparation for their entrance into the Holy Land prior to the death of Moses, the illegitimate and demonic methods used by the nations to discern the future or the divine will, called divination, was thoroughly condemned by the Lord through Moses (Deuteronomy 18:9-14). In contrast to the methods employed by the pagan nations, God's will involved the appointment of special men through whom His message would be conveyed. This is explained in Deuteronomy 18:15-22.

¹⁵ "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him."¹⁶ "This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'¹⁷ "And the Lord said to me, 'They have spoken well.'¹⁸ 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.'¹⁹ 'And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.'²⁰ 'But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'²¹ "And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?'"²² "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

In reviewing the contents of the Minor Prophets we see they generally have the same five (5) common elements that include the following:

1. Warning of impending judgment because of the nations' sinfulness
2. Description of the sin
3. Description of the coming judgment
4. Call for repentance
5. Promise of future deliverance.

Table 1: Minor Prophet grouping according to the Exile and the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah¹

Group	Book	Approximate Dates (B.C.)
Pre-Exilic Prophets of Israel	Jonah (preached to Nineveh)	850-780
	Amos	765-750
	Hosea	755-715
Prophets of Judah	Obadiah	840
	Joel	835-796
	Micah	740-690
	Nahum	630-612
	Habakkuk	606-604
	Zephaniah	625
Post-Exilic Prophets Prophets of the Returned Remnant	Haggai	520
	Zechariah	515
	Malachi	430

Although some of the prophecies we find in the Minor Prophets were fulfilled with the fall of the Kingdoms, there are numerous passages that have not been fulfilled. Provided below in the "Questions for Consideration" are several of these prophecies. In reading the provided passages, identify events that have not taken place and answer the questions as appropriate.

Questions for Consideration

1. Read Joel 2:28-29. What New Testament event could this be describing (hint: Acts 2:1-13)?
2. Read Joel 2:30-32. What future event is this describing? List some of the specific acts of God in this passage.
3. Read Zephaniah 1. Do you believe this to be a future event? Explain why. As a point of reference, look at **Table 1** and estimate how many years ago this book was written.
4. Read Zechariah 10; specifically verses 8-12.
 - a. In verse 9 we read that God will scatter the Jewish people among the nations. Considering that this book was written after they had already returned from the Babylonian exile (see **Table 1**), what could the scattering of the Jewish people refer to (hint: the Roman Empire)?
 - b. Assuming this text is a future event, what do verses 10-12 tell us about how the Jewish people will eventually see God? Could this be said of any Jews from 500 BC until now? Think in terms of the Jewish people, including their leaders, during the time of Jesus.
5. Of the prophets discussed in this lesson, Joel represents the earliest manuscript. How many years ago was Joel written? How does this make you feel realizing that God's "grasp" on the history of mankind is so good that prophecies from this long ago have still not been fulfilled?

¹ <https://bible.org/seriespage/7-minor-prophets>