

#23. INTRODUCTION TO THE MINOR PROPHETS

- 1. The Minor Prophets is a collection of twelve writings found at the end of the Old Testament in our English Bible.** The writings cover several hundred years, but are all dated in the era between the approaching fall of the northern Kingdom of Israel (722BC) and the days of restoration from the Exile (as late as the 5th century BC).
- 2. The authors of the books are generally conceded to be the men by whose names the books are called.** Backgrounds, professions, and circumstances differ, but each was considered to be a valid spokesman for Yahweh whose message was recorded and held in high esteem by the faithful people of God. We will examine each of the Minor Prophets in detail in subsequent chapters.

The English Bible Order of the Minor Prophets

- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

The Minor Prophets by Chronology and Intended Audience

- Obadiah - (850-840BC) wrote to Edom
- Joel - (835-796BC) wrote to Judah
- Jonah - (784-760BC) wrote to Nineveh
- Amos - (763-755BC) wrote to Israel
- Hosea - (755-710BC) wrote to Israel
- Micah - (735-710BC) wrote to Judah
- Nahum - (650-630BC) wrote to Nineveh
- Zephaniah - (635-625BC) wrote to Judah
- Habakkuk - (620-605BC) wrote to Judah
- Haggai - (520-505BC) wrote to Judah
- Zechariah - (520-470BC) wrote to Judah
- Malachi - (437-417BC) - wrote to Judah

Please note the same information for the Major Prophets

- Isaiah – (739-780BC) wrote to Judah
- Jeremiah/Lamentations – (627-570BC) wrote to Judah
- Daniel – (605-536BC) wrote to Jews in Babylonian exile
- Ezekiel – (593-570BC) wrote to the Jews in Babylonian exile

Another way of grouping the prophets is as follows:

Prophets of Israel – Jonah, Amos, and Hosea

Prophets of Judah – Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk

Transition Prophet to Jerusalem under Siege - Jeremiah

Exilic Prophets – Ezekiel and Daniel

Post-exilic Prophets – Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

3. There are three basic groups of Old Testament Prophets

- **There are many individual prophets unnamed, as well as several groups of prophets unnamed and uncounted.** We see an example of the former in the story of the widow of an unnamed prophet found in 2 Kings 4:1. The latter is typified by the unnumbered men of God who were in the Schools of the Prophets that were popular during the days of Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2:3).
- **There were several men known as Canonical Prophets.** The identifying mark of these men is that they prophesied, and we have their words in book form (see the list under #2 above).
- **There are several named prophets who were not writing prophets.** Among these are:
 - Ahijah (934-909BC) - 1 Kings 11:29-39
 - Elijah (875-848BC) - 1 Kings 17:1-2 Kings 2:11
 - Micaiah (865-853BC) - 1 Kings 22:8; 2 Kings 2:11)
 - Jehu (853BC) - 2 Chronicles 19:1-3
 - Elisha (848-797BC) - 2 Kings 2:1-9:1; 13:10-21
 - Other significant prophets include Huldah the Prophetess of Jerusalem, Nathan, Gad

and many others as well as various individuals who spoke prophetically, but were not prophets in the classic sense (for example, Moses, David, and even King Saul).

- Samuel was an extraordinary prophet, and his writings were at least a source for 1 Samuel. It is more likely, however, that Samuel was written by either Nathan or Gad (1 Chronicles 29:29) and are primarily historical narratives rather than a collection of prophetic oracles.

4. Key themes of the Minor Prophets

- **“God’s judgment is just and certain for all the earth.”**
 - **Hosea, Joel, and Amos** are encouraging messages reassuring Israel of God’s steadfast love, His unequalled power, and His ultimate authority on earth. Spanning the years 835-710BC. As with Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah the focus is on the years preceding the Assyrian captivity of Israel.
- **“Every person must live righteously before God”**
 - **Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah** are messages reminding Israel that all nations are under the control of The Lord. His Holy requirements are incumbent upon all men. These prophecies were given between the years 850-710BC. These were the years leading up to the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722BC.
- **“The Lord Himself will set everything in order when the judgment is completed.”**
 - **Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah** are messages reinforcing God’s triumphant, purifying judgment. These prophets thundered their messages between 650-605BC, the pivotal years leading up to the Siege of Jerusalem.
- **“Come home; live right; be blessed!”**
 - **Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi** are messages of promise and assurance given to those returning from exile. Dates in this section are from 520-417BC.