

The Voices of God to Israel: The Minor Prophets

1 – THE MINOR PROPHETS: INTRODUCTION

I. Basic Facts about the Old Testament Prophets

A. Introduction

- The books of the Prophets can be divided into two groups: major and minor prophets.
- The major prophets are the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah & Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel.
- The minor prophets are the books of Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.
- The prophets were written during three periods of Israel's history.
- These periods of history are with reference to the exile of the Jews to Babylon in 608 BC.
- The three periods are pre-exilic, exilic and post-exilic periods.
- The pre-exilic prophets spoke to either the northern kingdom, the southern kingdom or both.
- Knowing the period in which the book was written helps in understanding the message.

B. The Nature of Prophecy

- The prophetic books are among the most difficult books in the Bible to read and interpret with understanding.
- The primary difficulty for readers today is due to a misunderstanding concerning the nature of prophecy.
- Many Christians refer to the prophets for predictions about the coming of Jesus.
- Prophecy is more than just the telling of future things.
- The prophets do announce the future of Israel and the immediate nations around them, rather than our future.
- Prophecy provided guidance in their current setting and hope in God's control of their lives and world events.
- The message of the prophets was basically corporate as a group of people, not individual.
- The message is meant to rebuke, encourage, engender faith and repentance, and inform God's people about Himself and His plans.

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- Often, the prophet took a historical or theological crisis of his day and projected this into an eschatological setting.

II. The Simple Pattern of the Prophet's Message

- The prophet's message provides an identification of Israel's sin or God's love for her.
- The prophets message provided a prediction of a curse or blessing depending on circumstances.
- The prophet's message was not their own, but God's.
- The prophet's message is not original, but the same message that was delivered by Moses.

III. The Minor Prophets

- The Minor Prophets is the title given to the last twelve books of Old Testament.
- They are also known collectively as "the Twelve."
- These books originated in different time periods over a span of three hundred years.