

# TIMELESS TRUTHS FOR A CRUCIAL TIME

## The Messages of Twelve Old Testament Prophets

**Discussion Guide**  
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Title **An Introduction To The Minor Prophets** by Paul Martin

**Introduction:** Today we begin a new sermon series anchored in the Old Testament with focus on the twelve so-called “minor” prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Through these twelve prophets, God spoke to the nations of Israel, Judah, and Nineveh. How relevant are these messages for us today? That will be the purpose of our exposition during the following weeks.

### Sermon Outline

- I. **Who Are the “Minor Prophets?”**
  - A. Twelve last books of the Old Testament
  - B. Minor only in length, not in importance
  - C. May be grouped in three categories:
    1. Prophets to Israel in the Northern Kingdom
    2. Prophets to Judah in the Southern Kingdom
    3. Prophets during and after the exile (Babylonian captivity)
  - D. General context of the message:
    1. Language
    2. Nature of prophecy
    3. Culture
- II. **Why Are They Important And What Do They Have To Say To Me?**
  - A. Although the Old Testament comprises about 77% of the Bible, it is just as inspired as the New Testament.
  - B. From it Timothy learned the Scriptures that were able to make him wise unto salvation, and from it Jesus told Nicodemus he should have understood the necessity of a new birth by the Holy Spirit.
  - C. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes that there is nothing new under the sun. People are the same everywhere and in every culture: the problems facing the Jews are very much like our own in essence—only the time and place changes.
  - D. The warnings given to Israel have general application to our nation. Many people wonder where the United States is in end-time prophecy ... the probable answer is that it isn't there, and for many of the same reasons the Jews went into captivity.
- III. **How Can I Prepare For This Series In Order To Get The Most Benefit?**
  - A. Read the prophets message prior to coming on Sunday.
  - B. Ask God to speak to your life from His message.
  - C. See if you can discern the major theme and key verse (there may be legitimate differences of opinion on this—it is not a “hard and fast” interpretation).
  - D. Come with prayerful, expectant hearts to each message, asking God to personalize every message to your life.
  - E. Look for the many prophetic passages that will help us understand the spirit of our age and prepare our hearts for the return of Jesus Christ.

*For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

Romans 15: 4 (NASB)

*... that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.*

II Peter 3: 2 (NASB)

*You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, <sup>15</sup> and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

II Timothy 3: 14-17 (NASB)

**Discussion Questions**

**Prayer Requests:**

- 1.) If our focus will be on the “minor” prophets during the next few weeks, who are the “major” prophets and why are they called that? Explain the difference?
- 2.) Besides those mentioned in the sermon, can you recall other passages of Scripture that attest to the purpose, relevance, and divine nature of the Old Testament? Give examples.
- 3.) Some think that the complex issues of our modern age make the prophets’ messages irrelevant to our society today; however, others would disagree. Is there at least one condition that makes the message relevant today? Explain.
- 4.) What are some of the things that we can do, or of which we should be mindful, in order to better understand the message of the minor prophets?
- 5.) As a believer in Jesus Christ, what do you see as the purpose of Biblical prophecy (in other words, what purpose should it serve in your life today)?
- 6.) Can you think of some of the prophecies from the minor prophets that were fulfilled during the first century?
- 7.) Do you have a favorite Old Testament minor prophet? Explain why.

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**God’s Vision and Mission for the Alliance Bible Church**

The Alliance Bible Church is a multi-cultural church celebrating the life of Christ in us by:

- Proclaiming the full message of God’s Good News to the diverse cultures of McHenry and surrounding communities,
- Discipling believers in living the deeper Christian life,
- Equipping His people for the work of ministry, and
- Demonstrating the unconditional love of Jesus to our community through meaningful acts of service.



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