

NOTE TO PARENTS: At the end of this PDF is a very small chart listing the major and minor prophets and when they lived.

The Minor Prophets

by
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You remember what a prophet is, don't you? Yes a prophet is someone who tells people what the Lord has told him. And do you remember what we call what the prophet then says? That's right. When the prophet says what the Lord has told him, that is called a prophecy.

Now, there are many prophets in the Bible, aren't there? In fact, the last 17 books of the Old Testament were all written by prophets. And 16 of these books are named after the prophets who wrote them. The first 5 of these books of prophecy were written by what we call the 4 major prophets. "Major" means "bigger" or "greater". Do you remember who the 4 major prophets are? That's right. The 4 major prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and they wrote long (big) books and covered many different kinds of prophecies, didn't they? Jeremiah also wrote a short book, "Lamentations". We've talked about all 4 of those major prophets before, haven't we? Interestingly all of the major prophets are quoted in the New Testament.

Well, the other 12 books in the Old Testament that are named after the prophets who wrote them were written by what we call the minor prophets. "Minor" means "smaller" or "lesser". The minor prophets are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Not only are these 12 books of the minor prophets usually smaller, but they also don't cover so many kinds of prophecies as the major prophets do. But just as the major prophets are important, the minor prophets are also important and they are just as much a part of the Bible as the major prophets are. These books by the minor prophets are the very last books of the Old Testament and are in the Bible in pretty much the order of when they were written, which was between about 750 and 400 years before Jesus came to earth. Many of these minor prophets are quoted in the New Testament.

Well, today I thought we'd take a quick look at the 12 minor prophets. We're not going to go into a lot of detail, but at least you will get to know their names and a little about them and about what they prophesied. Does that sound like a good idea to you? I think you will enjoy this.

First, though, just a little background to help you better understand about the minor prophets. Now, the Jews had the Law that the Lord had given to Moses, didn't they? So they knew what they should do and what they should not do. But, remember, after King Solomon died, the land of Israel divided into 2 kingdoms, didn't it? Yes. The kingdom of Israel on the north and the kingdom of Judah on the south. That happened almost 1000 years before Jesus came to earth. And the kingdom of Israel right away began worshipping idols. Then the kingdom of Judah started worshipping idols, too. But they both knew that was very wrong, didn't they? Also, this was very foolish! Imagine worshipping something that people had made! We should only worship the Lord God, shouldn't we? After all, the

Lord God made everything, and He is the only God, isn't He?

Anyway, after Israel and Judah began worshipping idols, the Lord sent them prophets to warn them about their idolatry. And that is where both the major and minor prophets come in. Well, sometimes the kingdom of Judah would repent and stop worshipping idols for a while, but the kingdom of Israel never stopped.

Yes, despite the warnings of the prophets, both kingdoms of the Jews kept on worshipping idols and doing other very evil things. You see, worshipping idols is leaving the Lord, isn't it? And if a person or country leaves the Lord, then they start doing other things they shouldn't do, too. Doing one bad thing leads to doing another bad thing. And pretty soon they are doing many bad things. And the only way to stop this would have been to turn back to the Lord and do what the Lord says.

Well, eventually because of their great wickedness, the Lord allowed both kingdoms of the Jews to be conquered and taken away as captives. First the Assyrians conquered the kingdom of Israel and carried the Jews there away as captives. Then later the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar, conquered the kingdom of Judah, destroyed Jerusalem and the Lord's temple there, and carried those Jews away as captives. 70 years went by, and then after the 70 years, the Jews (now ruled by king Cyrus) were allowed to go back to their own land to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. By the way, this fulfilled a prophecy given by the major prophet Jeremiah.

So what does all of this have to do with the minor prophets? Well, as I said earlier, there were 12 minor prophets. The first 9 of these minor prophets all gave warnings for people to leave their idolatry and turn back to the Lord. All 9 of these were before Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah. Then the last 3 minor prophets were after the Jews returned to their own land. 9 before and 3 after. 9 and 3. So now let's look at the minor prophets, and we'll look at them in the order they appear in the Bible. Okay?

HOSEA is the first of the minor prophets. His book is 14 chapters long and is the second longest of the minor prophets. Hosea's father's name was Beerli, but we don't know any more about his parents. Hosea lived about 750 years before Jesus came to earth, and he was a prophet for about 40 years or so. He lived at the same time as the major prophet Isaiah. However, Isaiah prophesied mainly to the southern kingdom of Judah, while Hosea prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel. Hosea warned and warned Israel about their idolatry and begged them to return to the Lord, to be faithful to the Lord. Hosea's wife was unfaithful to Hosea, and this was also like a picture of how Israel was being unfaithful to the Lord. Hosea not only warned the people of Israel about the bad things that would happen to them because they were being wicked and worshipping idols, but he also then encouraged Israel that even though they would be punished, that later the Lord would do good things for them. And in the book of Matthew in the New Testament, Jesus quotes Hosea, saying, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." This means that the most important thing for us to do isn't for us to follow ceremonies. No. Instead, it is more important for us to love people and to help them turn away from their sins and turn to the Lord.

So, the first minor prophet is Hosea. But let's go on.

JOEL is the second minor prophet. His book is only 3 chapters long, but the chapters are fairly long, so it is the fifth longest of the minor prophets. Very little is known about Joel himself. His father's name was Pe-thu'-el, but that is all we know about his parents. Joel may have been a priest, but we don't know for sure. He lived somewhere around 750 years before Jesus came to earth, though we don't know exactly when. He lived in the kingdom of Judah and prophesied to Jerusalem. Nothing else is known about Joel himself. Joel lived at a time that there was not only no rain, but also there was a terrible plague of locusts that ate the crops and other green plants. And Joel told the Jews to weep and mourn because of this. Remember, they were worshipping idols and needed to stop that and to turn back to the Lord. Joel told them that if they did stop, then the Lord would bless them and give them new crops and rain to grow them. Then Joel tells them that someday the Lord will come and make everything right for the nation of the Jews and that their enemies will be destroyed. Yes, Joel prophesied about the last days and when the Lord Jesus will come back to earth and set up His kingdom. And in the book of Acts in the New Testament, Peter on the day of Pentecost gave a speech to a big crowd, and in this speech, Peter quotes the prophet Joel about the last days. Yes, Peter quoted Joel, saying, "...whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." And that is still true today, isn't it? If we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, trust in Him, we will be saved.

So, the minor prophets so far are Hosea and Joel. But let's go on.

AMOS is the third minor prophet. His book is 9 chapters long and is the third longest of the minor prophets. He lived near Bethlehem and was simply a shepherd and also someone who gathered figs. But one day the Lord called him to be a prophet. Isn't that interesting? A shepherd and fruit picker became a prophet! The Lord can use all types of people, can't He? Well, Amos lived during the reign of Uzziah (king of Judah) and of Jeroboam II (king of Israel). This was about 750 years before Jesus came to earth -- about the same time as the major prophet Isaiah and the minor prophet Hosea. The book that Amos wrote mentions that the Lord spoke to him 2 years before the earthquake -- and that's all it says about the earthquake! But it must have been a big earthquake for him to have mentioned it! At the time Amos prophesied, both the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah were at their greatest as far as money and importance were concerned. But also they were both being very wicked, having turned away from the Lord God and worshipping idols. First the Lord told Amos to prophesy that the Lord would punish the countries around the land of Israel -- Syria, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and other lands around Israel. Yes, those countries were not only very wicked themselves, but they were also being mean to the Jews, God's special people, and God doesn't like that. Then the Lord told Amos to prophesy against the Jews themselves in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel because they had left the Lord and were worshipping idols, and also they weren't being fair to the poor. And the Lord had Amos remind the Jews of how good the Lord had been to them when He had taken them out of their slavery in Egypt way back in the time of Moses and had protected them from their enemies. You remember about that, don't you? But, Amos said, they had forgotten that and had turned to idols instead. And Amos said that the Lord would punish them. And the Lord had Amos leave the kingdom of Judah where he lived and go up into the kingdom of Israel and tell them about this. Then one of the priests of an idol in Israel went to King Jeroboam II and told him that Amos was saying prophecies against him. Then this bad priest told Amos that he'd better run away back to the kingdom of Judah and stop prophesying against Israel. But Amos just told this bad priest that the Lord would punish him and that Israel would be captured. The book of Amos ends with the Lord's promise that the Jews would someday turn back to the Lord, and then He would bless them and take them

back to their land, and they'd never have to leave it again. When will that happen? Yes, that will happen when the Lord Jesus comes back to earth someday as King of the whole world. And Amos told Israel, "Seek good, and not evil, that you may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you." And if we want the Lord to be with us, we should try to do good things, too, shouldn't we? Yes, we should trust in the Lord and then follow what He says for us to do.

So, the minor prophets so far are Hosea, Joel, and Amos. But let's go on.

OBADIAH is the fourth minor prophet. His book is only 1 chapter long, the smallest book in the Old Testament! Nothing at all is really known about Obadiah himself except that he was a Jew. Of course, from what he prophesied, we know that Obadiah lived several hundred years before Jesus came to earth, but I don't know just when. Obadiah's prophecies were to the nation of Edom. You see, at the time of Obadiah, the nation of Edom was being very mean to the Jews in the kingdom of Israel. Now, countries were often named after the people who started them. So, do you remember who Edom was? Yes, Edom was Esau's other name. But who was Esau? Yes, hundreds of years before the time of the minor prophets, Esau had been Jacob's twin brother. But what was Jacob's other name? Yes, Jacob's other name was Israel, wasn't it? And the Jews (who are also called the children of Israel) are all descended from Jacob, Esau's twin brother. So the people from Edom (Esau) and the people from Israel (Jacob) were cousins, weren't they? But Edom was happy when Israel had been captured by the Assyrians! In fact, if someone from Israel tried to escape, Edom would try to stop them! So the Lord had Obadiah tell Edom that bad things would happen to Edom, but that later good things would happen to Israel.

So, the minor prophets so far are Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Obadiah. But let's go on.

JONAH is the fifth minor prophet. His book is only 4 chapters long. You've heard about Jonah, haven't you?! Well, Jonah's father's name was A-mit'tai, but we don't know anything more about his family. Jonah was from the kingdom of Israel and lived about 750 years before Jesus came to earth. Jonah prophesied during the time of Jeroboam II of Israel. At the time of Jonah, the kingdom of Assyria was powerful and was conquering other nations and being mean to them. The capital city of Assyria was Ninevah. Now, I've told you about Jonah, before, haven't I? Yes, the Lord told Jonah to go to Ninevah and warn them that the Lord was going to destroy them because they were so evil. But Jonah didn't want to do this, did he? So what did he do? Why, he went in the opposite direction and got on a ship! But he should have known that he couldn't run away from the Lord, shouldn't he?! Well, the Lord sent a storm, Jonah was thrown overboard, and he was swallowed by a big fish. He then prayed to the Lord, and the Lord had the fish vomit Jonah up on dry land. Then the Lord again told him to go warn Ninevah that the Lord would destroy them, and this time Jonah obeyed. And the king of Ninevah repented, so the Lord didn't destroy Ninevah at that time. Jonah was mad about this, but the Lord taught Jonah that it was the right thing for the Lord to do, for Him not to destroy them then, since they had humbled themselves before the Lord. In the New Testament Jonah is sometimes called "Jonas", and do you remember why he is mentioned in the New Testament? Yes, Jesus Himself mentioned Jonah when Jesus told a prophecy about Himself. Jesus said, "Just as Jonah was 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the great fish, so shall the Son of Man (meaning Jesus) be in the belly of the earth 3 days and 3 nights." But what did Jesus mean by that? Well, Jesus was making a word picture for us, wasn't He? He was talking about when He would die on the cross (like Jonah had been

swallowed by the big fish) and then He would be buried in the earth for 3 days and 3 nights (like Jonah had been in the belly of the big fish for 3 days and 3 nights), but then Jesus would be alive again, resurrected (like Jonah had gotten out of the big fish). And Jesus said, "Ninevah repented because of the preaching of Jonah, but One greater than Jonah is here." Jesus was talking about Himself, wasn't He? Yes, Jonah was a picture/prophesy of when Jesus would die, be buried, then be alive again after 3 days.

So, the minor prophets so far are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, and Jonah. But let's go on.

MICAH is the sixth minor prophet. His book is 7 chapters long and is the fourth longest of the minor prophets. Micah lived during the reigns of 3 of the kings of Judah. They were Kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. This was about 700 to 740 years before Jesus came to earth. Nothing is really known about Micah except that he lived at the same time as the major prophet Isaiah and the minor prophets Hosea and Amos. (But we aren't told if they knew each other.) Micah prophesied against both Israel and Judah because of their idolatry and their other wickedness. He also prophesied about the destruction of Jerusalem and that the Jews would be captured by enemies and taken away from their land. But then Micah prophesied that a great Ruler would come from Bethlehem. Who would that Ruler be? Yes, that was a prophecy about when Jesus, the Son of God, would come to earth and be born in Bethlehem, wasn't it? And in the book of Matthew in the New Testament, this prophecy from Micah is quoted. But then Micah went on to prophesy that in the last days Jerusalem would be restored, that the Lord would someday be King of everything and everyone and would judge the nations, and that many nations (not just the Jewish nation) would go to Jerusalem to worship the Lord. And then there would be no more idolatry anywhere! Instead, Micah prophesied, there would be peace everywhere. Won't that be wonderful?! Why, Micah even told how people would change their weapons into things to farm with! And when will all of those good things happen? Yes, when the Lord Jesus comes back to earth again someday. And Micah said that the Lord loves to be merciful. And Micah also told us what the Lord wants us to do. What is that? Why, the Lord wants us to be fair, to love being merciful, and to walk humbly with God. So we should all try to do those things, shouldn't we? Yes, we should be fair and be merciful to other people, and we should humbly live the way God wants us to live. And how can we know the way God wants us to live? That's right. By doing what He tells us in the Bible.

So, the minor prophets so far are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah. But let's go on.

NAHUM is the seventh minor prophet. His book is only 3 chapters long. Nothing is known about the life of Nahum himself. But from what he wrote, we can tell that he prophesied about 650 years before Jesus came to earth. Nahum tells of how powerful the Lord is. In his little book, Nahum says that the Lord doesn't get angry easily, but that He will finally get angry with those who are enemies to Him and enemies to His people the Jews. Now, remember that Jonah had prophesied to the wicked city of Ninevah, the capital of Assyria, hadn't he? And they had repented and humbled themselves before the Lord, hadn't they? And you remember, don't you, that because of this the Lord didn't destroy Ninevah then. Well, later Ninevah went back to their evil ways and was very cruel and wicked again. So now Nahum (about 100 years after Jonah) in his book, prophesies that the Lord will destroy Ninevah because of its wickedness. But Nahum also says, "The Lord is good, a stronghold in

the day of trouble; and He knows those that trust in Him." That is something for us to remember, too, isn't it? To trust in the Lord God.

So, the minor prophets so far are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, and Nahum. But let's go on.

HABAKKUK is the eighth minor prophet. His book is also only 3 chapters long. Because Habakkuk wrote a prayer in the last chapter of his book and said that it was to "the chief singers on my stringed instruments", it is thought that Habakkuk was at least a Levite and maybe even had to do with the services at the temple. And from what he wrote, it seems that he lived about 600 years before Jesus came to earth. Other than that, nothing is known about his life, Habakkuk points out how badly the kingdom of Judah was sinning; then the Lord tells him that the Chaldeans (Babylonians) would come and conquer Judah. But then Habakkuk says that later the Lord will destroy the Chaldeans. And Habakkuk said, "...the just shall live by faith." The Apostle Paul quotes this from Habakkuk in the book of Romans in the New Testament part of the Bible, that the just shall live by faith.

So, the minor prophets so far are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk. But let's go on.

ZEPHANIAH is the ninth minor prophet. And his book also is only 3 chapters long. He lived about 630 years before Jesus came to earth. His father's name was Cush. Many people think that perhaps he may have been the great-grandson of King Hezekiah, but I'm not sure of this. Zephaniah lived in the southern kingdom of Judah at the same time as the minor prophet Nahum and the major prophet Jeremiah, though the Bible doesn't say if they knew each other. Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of King Josiah. We don't know anything else about his family or his own life. Zephaniah prophesied warnings for the Jews and for everyone who does bad things. But he also prophesied about someday when the Lord will come back to earth and make everything to be good and will rule over the whole earth as King. And Zephaniah said, "The Lord thy God who is in the midst of you is mighty; He will save..." Yes, the Lord is very powerful, isn't He?

So, the minor prophets so far are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. But let's go on.

HAGGAI is the tenth minor prophet. His book has even less chapters, only 2 chapters. We really don't know anything about Haggai himself except that he prophesied about 520 years before Jesus came to earth and that this was after the Jews had come back to Judah after having been conquered by Nebuchadnezzar and being in Babylon for 70 years. Remember, Cyrus the king of Persia had let them go back. (The Medes and the Persians had conquered Babylon.) Yes, Cyrus let them go back to rebuild the destroyed city of Jerusalem and to rebuild the Lord's temple there. (The major prophet Jeremiah had prophesied that this would happen). Well, they went back, and they were rebuilding the city and building houses for themselves, but they weren't working on the temple. It seems that both Haggai and the next minor prophet (Zechariah) were there in Jerusalem with the Jews and were upset about this. Then the Lord spoke to Haggai and said, "The people are building houses for themselves, but they say it isn't the time to build the Lord's house (the temple)." The Lord said, "Tell them to think about it. Tell them that you plant crops, but they don't grow and you don't have

enough to eat; you don't have enough to drink; you don't have warm clothes. There is no rain. So," said the Lord, "tell them to go get wood and build my house." And the Jews did; they rebuilt the temple of the Lord. And then the Lord blessed them. Then the Lord gave Haggai prophecies about when the Lord would come someday to set up His kingdom. Oh, and do you remember another time when we talked about Isaiah that I said that a man named George Frideric Handel wrote a long, beautiful song called "Messiah"? It was a song about both times that Jesus would come to earth, wasn't it? And Handel used many verses from the Bible, especially from the book of Isaiah. Well, Handel also used 2 verses from the book of Haggai in his song!

So, the minor prophets so far are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai. But let's go on.

ZECHARIAH is the eleventh minor prophet. His book is the longest of the minor prophets. It has 14 chapters and is even a few verses longer than the book of Hosea. Zechariah was a priest. His father's name was Berechiah, and his grandfather was a man named Iddo. You remember, don't you, that King Cyrus of Persia had let the Jews go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple? But did they rebuild the temple right away? No, they built houses for themselves instead, didn't they? Well, as I said earlier, both Zechariah and Haggai were there in Jerusalem, and they both prophesied and inspired the people to rebuild the temple. This was about 520 years before Jesus came to earth. Also, Zechariah often gave prophecies that wouldn't happen until hundreds of years later. Do you remember in the New Testament what is called the Triumphal Entry or Palm Sunday? This was when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and the people in Jerusalem waved palm branches and shouted and were very happy and were saying Jesus was King? Well, Zechariah had prophesied about the Triumphal Entry around 500 years before it happened! Yes, Zechariah had written, "Rejoice greatly...shout, O... Jerusalem: behold your King comes to you; he is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding on a donkey..." Also, remember George Frideric Handel and his beautiful music, "Messiah"? Well, Handel used that verse and the next verse from Zechariah in his song "Messiah". This next verse talks about when the Lord Jesus will someday come back to earth and be King over the whole world. And Zechariah also prophesied that Jerusalem would become a battleground of the nations but then that Jerusalem would become the religious center of the world. Yes, someday all countries will go to Jerusalem and worship the Lord there! When will that happen? That's right, this will happen someday when the Lord Jesus comes back to earth and sets up His kingdom and is King of everyone and everything. And Zechariah prophesied about this.

So, the minor prophets so far are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Zechariah. But let's go on.

MALACHI is the twelfth and last minor prophet. His book is also the very last book in the Old Testament. His book is 4 chapters long. We know nothing of Malachi's own life except that from what he wrote, he seems to have been living about 400 or so years before Jesus came to earth. Cyrus would already have let the Jews go back to Judah and Jerusalem, and they would already have rebuilt the Lord's temple. The Jewish nation never worshipped idols again, but after some years the Jews were beginning to forget the Lord and not honor Him as they should. So the Lord told Malachi to tell the Jews that He loved them and was a father to them, but they weren't doing right. The Lord especially had Malachi scold the priests, as they weren't serving the Lord as they should. And the

Lord said He wouldn't bless them if they kept acting this way. And then the Lord gave prophecies about when the Lord Jesus would come to earth, both the first time and then again someday when He would come back again the second time, this time as King. In fact, Malachi wrote one prophecy where the Lord tells him, "Behold, I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me...". The book of Mark in the New Testament quotes this verse from Malachi. And then in the very last verses of the whole Old Testament, Malachi also writes that the Lord says, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord..." And then from what Jesus says in the New Testament, we know that this was at least partially fulfilled by John the Baptist when he told people to get ready for Jesus. Oh, and George Frideric Handel also used parts of 3 verses in the book of Malachi in his beautiful song "Messiah".

And that is the last of the minor prophets. So, all 12 of the minor prophets are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Whesh!

The longest of the minor prophets is Zechariah, the next longest is Hosea, then Amos, then Micah, and then Joel. All the rest are much shorter.

So what do we find in the minor prophets? Well, warnings are given in the minor prophets, and words of comfort are also given, aren't they? And there are prophecies about Jesus, too, about both the first time He came to make a way for our sins to be forgiven and the second time when He will someday come back to set up His kingdom. And, then as Habakkuk said, the just shall live by faith. But what does that mean? Live by faith? Faith in what?

But it is n't faith in what; it is actually faith in Whom, isn't it?! Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Trusting Jesus, the Son of God, to save people from their sins. And how did Jesus make a way to save people from their sins? Yes, by dying on the cross for our sins. But did Jesus stay dead? No! Of course not! Three days later Jesus was resurrected, was alive again. Yes, And after Jesus was alive again, lots of people saw Him alive, didn't they? Then He went back to heaven where He is still alive. But as so many of both the major prophets and the minor prophets have said, the Lord Jesus will come back again someday and set up His kingdom, won't He? And everyone who has trusted in Jesus to save them from their sins will be saved and will be able someday to be with Him in heaven. And they will also be with Him when He comes back again, and they will live with Him forever and ever. Yes, the just shall live. How? By faith in the Lord Jesus.

So now let's very quickly go over all of this that we've been talking about today, okay? That will help us to remember it better, won't it?

Okay, then. After King Solomon died, the whole land of Israel had divided into 2 kingdoms, hadn't it? And what were these 2 kingdoms? Yes, Israel and Judah. The kingdom of Israel was in the north, and the kingdom of Judah was in the south. And then the Jews had turned to idolatry, and prophets were sent to them, warning them to stop this evil and to turn back to the Lord. And this is where both the major prophets and the minor prophets come in, isn't it? Yes, both the major and minor prophets warned and warned the Jews. (Remember, the major prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, aren't they?) These major and minor prophets also warned other countries which

were being wicked. But these countries often didn't listen to the prophets, did they? No, and this went on for many years.

Well, the Jews wouldn't stop worshipping idols, and they were doing other very wicked things, too. So first the Lord let the Assyrians come and capture the kingdom of Israel. Some years later the Lord let the Babylonians under their king, Nebuchadnezzar, come and capture the kingdom of Judah and destroy Jerusalem and the temple. Then after a while the Persians conquered Babylon. Then, as the major prophet Jeremiah had prophesied, after the Jews had been in Babylon for 70 years, Cyrus, the king of Persia, told the Jews they could go back to Judah and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. And all during this time, the Lord had sent prophets to the Jews, hadn't He?

I know that it is sometimes hard to remember what order these events happened in, isn't it? The Assyrians captured the kingdom of Israel; the Babylonians captured the kingdom of Judah; but Cyrus let them go back! It can get confusing! But there is a little way that may help you. Just remember "A,B,C", like in the alphabet. "A" for Assyria, "B" for Babylon, and "C" for Cyrus. A,B,C. Assyria, Babylon, Cyrus! Assyria captured the northern kingdom; Babylon captured the southern kingdom, and Cyrus let them go back. A,B,C! Assyria, Babylon, Cyrus! Does that help you? But back to the minor prophets.

So, as we said before, there are 12 minor prophets. The first 9 minor prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah) prophesied to the Jews and other countries before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, didn't they? And the last 3 minor prophets prophesied after the Jews returned to their land. 9 minor prophets before and 3 after. Now, the first 2 of these last 3 minor prophets (Haggai and Zechariah) prophesied after the Jews had been in Babylon for 70 years and Cyrus had let them go back to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. Then the very last minor prophet (Malachi) prophesied some years after the temple had been rebuilt. Again, 9 minor prophets before the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and 3 minor prophets after the Jews went back to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. 9 and 3!

So, let's list the minor prophets again. Why don't you say them with me this time, okay? The minor prophets are (say them with me): Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Good for you! And when did they do their prophesying? Yes, between about 750 and 400 years before Jesus came to earth.

Now, since the major and minor prophets all have their own separate books that they wrote, sometimes it may seem as if they all lived at different times. But actually many of them lived at either the same time or sort of the same time. And they all lived within about 350 years of each other, didn't they?

Let's see now. One of the major prophet (Isaiah) and 5 of the minor prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, and Micah) all lived around the same time. Though we don't know if they knew each other or not.

Then about 100 years later, 3 of the major prophets (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel) and also 3 of the minor prophets (Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah) all lived around the same time. Again, I

don't know if they knew each other or not. Now, people aren't sure just when the minor prophet Obadiah lived, but it was probably around this time. And that takes care of the 4 major prophets and 9 of the minor prophets, doesn't it?

Then after about another 100 years, 2 of the minor prophets (Haggai and Zechariah) lived at the same time. They would probably have known each other there in Jerusalem as they were both encouraging the Jews to rebuild the temple, weren't they?

Finally, after about another 100 years, the last minor prophet (Malachi) lived and prophesied.

Whesh! That's a lot of information, isn't it?! But if you remember 2 things, it will help you to remember. We've talked about these 2 things before, but let's go over them again. Okay? These 2 things to remember are "9 and 3" and "A,B,C". First, let's go over 9 and 3 again. Of the 12 minor prophets, 9 were before the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon, and 3 were after some of the Jews returned to their land. 9 and 3. And the second thing to remember is A,B,C. Assyria (A) captured the northern kingdom of Israel, Babylon (B) captured the southern kingdom of Judah, and Cyrus (C) let them go back to their own land. 9 and 3; A,B,C!

I hope that you have enjoyed hearing about the 12 minor prophets, prophets who wrote the very last books of the Old Testament. Did you?

LIST OF MAJOR AND MINOR PROPHETS

The 4 Major Prophets:

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel

The 12 Minor Prophets:

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zehariah, and Malachi

When They Prophesied (approximately):

Around 700 B.C.:

- *Isaiah66 chapters
- Hosea14 chapters
- Joel 3 chapters(not really sure when)
- Amos 9 chapters
- Jonah4 chapters
- Micah7 chapters

Around 600 B.C.:

- *Jeremiah52 chapters
- *Ezekiel.....48 chapters
- *Daniel12 chapters
- Nahum3 chapters
- Habakkuk 3 chapters
- Zephaniah..... 3 chapters
- Obadiah 1 chapter..... (not really known when)

Around 520 B.C.:

- Haggai 2 chapters
- Zehariah14 chapters

Around 400 B.C.:

- Malachi 4 chapters

*Major Prophets