

THE MINOR PROPHETS FOR TODAY INTRODUCTORY NOTES

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These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped lectures given between 1977 and 1997 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., formerly the Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth.

The Old Testament section of the Bible was put together, canonized, by Ezra. It was in three parts, The Law, The Prophets, and the Writings starting with the Psalms which formed the introductory book to the third division. These three sections were called the Tanak by the Jews. What we call the New Testament was written after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Actually in the whole Bible everything written after the 'beginning' history, and the birth of Esau and Jacob who became 'Israel' is primarily directed towards Israel with its centre in Palestine and focused on Jerusalem, then expanded to include the 'Nations' or Gentiles, and then the whole world.

The thread running through the entire Bible is of Israel's idolatry, spiritual and physical fornication, their stubborn refusal to obey God and love and appreciate Him for all he has done for them; and the resultant punishments and withholding of blessings, despite which, they have never got the point, and they will not actually repent until right up until the 'time of the end' just before Christ's second coming.

The single scroll that contained the Twelve Minor Prophets has been little understood throughout the ages or aeons, was actually written ultimately for the last generation, both Israel and Jews and also for Gentiles, who would be given greater understanding in the days before the second advent.

Daniel 12:4 KJV But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run (reading and studying the scriptures) to and fro, and knowledge (of prophecy) shall be increased.

So this prophecy in Daniel is not really talking about planes, trains and automobiles, or that scientific knowledge would be increased to the extent that it has been! Although it is true in this era that we have unprecedented travel and amazing growth of the knowledge about the world we live in as we were once told this verse meant.

What this verse actually means by “run to and fro” is referring to studying back and forth in the scriptures to gain ever increasing knowledge about God’s plan which He would reveal in the “time of the end”. Like “here a little and there a little”.

It is always important to note when God repeats Himself for emphasis in the Bible, and it always pays to take greater notice of repetition.

Daniel 12:9 KJV And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

So our understanding of the Bible is unfolding in this era as we grow in grace and **the** knowledge of God’s Plan for His Family, and it is really for our understanding as Christians today, for those individuals selected by God as His Elect from the foundation of the world.

As Paul said, 1 Corinthians 10:11 KJV Now all these things (that is events from Adam, Moses, through Exodus, up until the days of Christ and beyond, all) happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world (aeons) are come.

At the time the Gospel of Luke was written and directed to the Gentiles by Luke, with the direction of Paul under the inspiration of God, only the Tanak existed.

At this time there was a large number of ‘writings’ in circulation, and some people, especially the Gentiles wanted to know which were inspired by God, so here is a statement that authenticates not only the Tanak but also the inspiration of the New Testament.

Luke 24:44 KJV And he (Jesus) said unto them, (After Christ’s resurrection) These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. 45
Then opened He (Christ) their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. (The Old Testament, the Tanak)

So the disciples’ eyes were opened to a greater extent at that time, around 30 A.D., but this knowledge was to increase even more as the years went by. In fact around 63 A.D., after another ‘generation of forty years went by, Paul, James, and Peter were given new revelations enabling them to understand the “mystery”.

The importance of understanding this ‘unfolding’ of God’s plan has been lost on those Christians who still live with one foot in “the Law”, and one toe in the New Testament Gospel.

The twelve Minor Prophets were considered one book, and it was on one scroll, and is primarily for our learning today. Stephen said in the book of Acts that these twelve books were one book when he quoted from the book of Amos.

Acts 7:42 Then God turned , and gave them up to worship the host of heaven: as it is written in the book of the prophets: *“O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?” Amos 5:25-27.*

The Minor Prophets is a book that has been understood to some degree by all generations, but only the last generation before the second advent was to come the expanded understanding that its real significance is for today, and the future just around the corner from us now.

The structure of the Old Testament used Temple imagery, the structure of God’s house is a replica of God’s throne in heaven. The first five books of the Law were associated with the Holy of Holies. The one book of the twelve Minor Prophets pictured the area to the East outside the Holy Place; The Psalms and the Prophets, eleven books, pictured the East Court of Israel and the outer Temple.

We have our King James Bible organized into sixty-six books, but under God’s inspiration, it will be soon be put into its proper order, and the correct perfect number of books, which is forty-nine or seven times seven. So in what we call the Old Testament there will be the Law, five books; the Prophets, five plus one is six; the Psalms section plus eleven is twenty-two, or three sevens, one book for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Then we leave the Old Testament behind, and move into a New Era with The Gospels, five books; James to Jude seven books; Paul’s writings fourteen books; plus Revelation, one makes a total of twenty-seven books. Old Testament twenty-two plus New Testament twenty-seven equals forty-nine books, which is seven times seven, a perfect number and structure.

The twelve Minor Prophets were associated with the Temple which had three main areas, and the House of God was regulated with laws. The first five books were associated with the Holy of Holies, the next books six books of the Prophets, which included the twelve Minor Prophets, were associated with the area outside to the East, and outside the Holy of Holies

that was called the Holy Place where only the priests were allowed and perform their administrations.

The other books, the Psalms associated with David who was a King wrote, under divine inspiration, and eleven books from Psalms to Chronicles related to the Eastern portion of the Temple, to do with Court of Israel, the Court of the men and the Court of the women, and then outside the Eastern Gates and in the time of Christ there was an outer Temple where the 'Red Heifer' was sacrificed.

This area outside of the Temple was known as the "the place of the Red Heifer" area. Numbers 19: explains that the red heifer was sacrificed and the blood mixed with water, and used for purification purposes.

There was a specific area where they sacrificed and ate. So you have a morning meal, the morning sacrifice, then the evening sacrifices or meal, the table of the shewbread on which were the twelve loaves and the wine to drink.

The next section related to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, which don't just happen to be in chronological order, were associated with part of the area called the Holy Place.

Then the Minor Prophets, which were associated where the table of the showbread with the twelve loaves was, (twelve tribes, twelve candlesticks, etc.) and the wine etc., were located. It was a picture of God eating with his people, in His home, and in His house, and enjoying the food, which He does in Heaven with His family.

The Word of God is to be 'eaten', mentioned in several places in the Bible, and Christ said eat my 'flesh'. These twelve short sections of scripture certainly offer a very nourishing and concentrated meal.

The Major Prophets were longer, Isaiah 66, Jeremiah 52, and Ezekiel 48 chapters.

Minor is shorter in length, not at all minor in influence or importance, and these twelve are also in chronological order. First seven Hosea to Nahum related primarily to Assyrian times, Habakkuk Zephaniah were written in the Neo-Babylonian era, then the last three Haggai, Zechariah were written in the Post-Babylonian or Chaldean era.

Stephen referred to "the book of the prophets", as one book.

There were 22 books in the original OT, 5 law, 6 books, Psalms etc 11 books. = 22 books.

The New Testament, the Gospels plus Acts are five books, the “New Law”, then seven books from James to Jude, with reference to Israelites living abroad, then 14 books of Paul all came from Jerusalem. The area that the Bible is centred on is Jerusalem, and then on outwards to include the whole of the world.

Realise that God has picked you personally to be here and now, to hear and understand what the Minor Prophets are all about. You specifically as an individual have been chosen to understand more than any in previous generations as we move towards the ‘end’ generation. Look in the mirror, and acknowledge that you, yes you, are able to understand this for a reason.

Notice that the very first sermon given to Christians, and the huge power that was released on the 1st Pentecost were based on a quote from Joel.

Acts 2:14 Peter standing up with the eleven, These are not drunken, 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. (9 a.m.) 16 But this is (represents) that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: 19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come:

So Peter, under inspiration on the first Pentecost, says that Joel was talking about “The Day of the Lord” which is also in detail in Revelation. And also Joel mentioned the promise of safety and salvation to those who are ‘in Christ’ at the time, and who call upon His name in sincerity and truth will be saved.

Acts 2:21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Then Peter eyeballs the crowd and says: Acts 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by

miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

And then he continues with the first Christian sermon based on this prophecy by Joel. So the first sermon is based on a quote from the Minor Prophets. Peter at that time believed that it was all going to happen in their lifetime, and Paul thought the same. After 63 A.D. when the 'mystery' of our amazing future and potential was revealed, they were told then that the day with God is as a thousand years. God's timing certainly is not man's timing as there would be another 2000 years at least before the second advent.

The Minor Prophets were very pertinent for the generation when they were written, but what they contain is much, much more relevant to those in the last generation before Christ returns. We cannot set dates, but we are growing in knowledge, and understanding more of what they are all about than anyone previously.

We need to pay close attention to all events and prophecies from the Creation, Adam, Exodus, and forward to Christ's time, as what has happened in the past is an indication about what is going to happen in the future, and then on to the 'last generation' just before Christ's return.

"Abomination" was something that happened before, but it is going to happen again.

II Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

The man of sin is going to be able to show himself as God, and fool the world with his supernatural acts, and mislead even the elect if that were possible, so we have to be really on our guard.

Zechariah chapters 12,13, and 14 have a chronological scheme of prophetic circumstances, they were put in scripture, and are set out for the 'end time' generation, including information about the Mount of Olives.

Malachi 4:4 Remember... I will send you Elijah is coming BEFORE the great and terrible day of the Lord. So Malachi, (the messenger) is talking not about HIS time, but events that are prophesied to happen in the last generation just before Christ returns.

The Minor Prophets end with the period that precedes the Day of the Lord and that is why it is so important that we should study these scriptures now when we are getting closer every day, although there are some years yet to pass. We do not understand everything at this time, but more will become known.

The priests were told to eat the twelve loaves, and they would come out with Wisdom. We are told to 'eat' the Word of God, and the first sermon to the Ecclesia in the Christian era came from the book of Joel.

B side.

The Minor Prophets although they had true relevance for their time, were really addressed to the end time. As we have already noted, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:11 KJV Now all these things, that is from Creation, through Adam, Moses, then the Exodus, and up until the days of Christ and beyond, all happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world (aeons) are come. Paul would say that we should pay attention to this principle.

Jesus was crucified in 30 A.D., and the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. a generation of 40 years, but the length of a 'generation' might be seen to be different in various parts of the Bible. So we are still not sure exactly what it means by "this generation shall not pass" in Matthew 24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

The Ecclesia of early Christianity had greater knowledge than previous generations, but there was more to come in a later age, just before the second coming of Jesus Christ and the setting up of the Kingdom of God.

The geography of that time, the individuals, and the events of that time are evident in the Minor Prophets, and prophecy is dual in nature, as an 'A' and a 'B', i.e. a 'then' and in the future. Many prophecies are in threefold stages, ABC, MNO, XYZ for three series of events to occur, usually past – present – and future, sometimes spaced a long time even thousands of years apart.

There was a 1st Adam, and a 2nd Adam which is Christ. There was a 1st King David, and there is to come a 2nd King David who again is Christ. There was the first Elijah, then there was John the Baptist who was an Elijah, and there is an 'Elijah' yet to come just before Christ's return.

God says to the false gods of Israel, and Judah, and thence to the whole world's nations:

Isaiah 41:21-24 Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. 22 Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen (in the future): let them shew the former things (the past), what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. (in the future.) 23 Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.

This also gives force to the often repeated fact that God speaks of the past, the present and the future as all being under His command and illustrated in all prophecies. The past will happen again, perhaps in the present, and then again in the future.

All these prophecies are not only for Israel and the Jews, not only for the Christian Ecclesia, but also for the Gentiles. Also they are for us specifically for today and the near future, because we have a special and different relationship with Christ from any other of these groups.

Ecclesiastes 1:9 The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 3:15 That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

God requires us to know the past. The past is a prologue for the future. Again, note carefully God repeating Himself for emphasis.

God says to those who rely on idols for their information, come on, show us what you predict, and I will show that you and your idols are nothing!

Isaiah 41:24 Behold, ye (false gods, false ministers, "scientists", and all who rely on their own 'wisdom' which is foolishness with God) are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he (anyone, especially religious people) that chooseth you.

Malachi 2:11 Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

Ezra was the person who assembled the Old Testament Canon in the 5th Century B.C., who under the inspiration of God put only those books into the mix that God wanted there.

John was the one who under inspiration assembled the Canon of the New Testament at the end of the 1st Century, and again, only the books that God wanted in the canon were included.

Truly the whole Bible was assembled under the inspiration of God, and yes, He did allow human error and mis-translations of passages to occur. Jerome, 347 – 420 A.D. who translated the Bible into Latin, (the Vulgate) actually turned the structure of the Bible upside down. In 1611, the King James translators put in “helpful” verse and chapter breaks, almost completely masking the majesty of the original texts, and the symphonic harmony of the books as a complete whole. But the original format is going to be restored in our time.

It is all part of God’s technique to obscure the whole truth at any one time, and in a sense forces detailed study, but even then, any understanding can only come with God’s specific assistance to any individual who has been called. Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

People were saying that the prophecies were failing, so Peter wrote:

2 Peter 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And when people experience, or hear about ministers, or even bishops being involved in perversion, in ways that are not of God, the Holy Bible and Christianity as people know it are brought into disrepute.

Look at the whole book of Revelation as it holds a great deal of detail about the seven years at the 'end time' generation; split into two halves, 3½ - 3½ years. Much of Revelation is garnered from the Old Testament. Restitution of all things will mean that we will understand so much more than we have previously. We shall understand better why the Minor Prophets were written at the times and in the order that they were. Even disparate prophecies about different people and events, all focus on the culmination of the age.

2 Peter 2:2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; (pagan activities, homosexuality, same sex marriages, and other wrong and evil ideas), by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (and obscured!)

Peter in his second sermon of the Christian era made it clear that God and Christ are in charge.

Acts 3: And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. 4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. 6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. 12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? 13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

Peter immediately made it clear who actually healed the man, and let them know that they should give God the credit.

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

Acts 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all his Holy prophets since the world began.

The times of refreshing or restitution of all things will come at the time just prior to the second advent.

Matthew 17:9 And as they came down from the mountain, (of transfiguration) Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead. 10 And his disciples asked him, saying, "Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?" 11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

An 'Elijah' the prophet will reappear on the scene at the time of the end, so Christ confirmed. When he does, those who are Christ's and have His Holy Spirit will know who he is.

Matthew 17:12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. 13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

Malachi, the 'messenger' is the last of the Minor Prophets, and the end of the Old Testament says in essence to Israel to get ready to receive another 'messenger'.

Malachi 4:4 Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. 5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet **before** the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

Restoration takes place before the second advent.

Malachi 4:6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

The 'fathers', Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the other 'fathers' had been mistaken, or better said 'limited' all through the generations.

We are going to see more of what these prophecies are all about in the near future.

God, in Jesus Christ, is coming to pour out the Spirit of Supplication. Israel and the Jews in the country called Israel and around the world are going to come to repentance.

Pay attention to the Minor Prophets for they are indeed for today.