

THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES (Academic)

While we are not under the O.T. Law as a system of justification, the O.T. Scriptures are of great value for us today...

- 1) They were written for our learning, source of comfort and hope. - Ro 15:4
- 2) They were written for our admonition, we learn of mistakes to avoid -1Co 10:11
- 3) They are profitable "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness".- cf. 2Ti 3:14-17
- 4) They teach us about the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ Jn 5.46. Lu 24. 27; 44. 1 Pet 1.11

A Study of the Old Testament should produce

- 1) A knowledge of God's holiness, righteousness, justice and mercy
- 2) An understanding of God's dealings in the nations of men
- 3) An appreciation of the Scriptures as to accuracy and fulfilled detail revealed in prophesy

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

God's revelation to humanity came through a group of people known as the prophets. Scripture tells us a number of things about the Old Testament prophets. They include the following...

A "PROPHET" WAS A SPOKESMAN FOR ANOTHER...

Aaron was a spokesman for his brother Moses -

Exod 7 v11 And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet."

The Bible says Aaron spoke as Moses' spokesman:

Exod 4. v30 And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.

- 1) Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, a prophet...
 - a. Was a spokesman for God -

2Pe 1: v20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. v21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit

Heb 1 v1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
 - b. Was given something to say, and had to say it! - Jer 20:7-9
- 2) A prophet was primarily a "forth-teller", though sometimes a "fore-teller of God's word which often pertained to future events
- 3) The fulfilled prophecies of these prophets are therefore a strong proof of inspiration
- 4) Much of their word concerned not the future, but current events. Cp both in Samuel/Saul

W Kelly in his writings on the Minor Prophets writes " The moral ground for Prophecy is departure from God".

THE PROPHET SPOKE GOD'S WORD

The true prophet was one who spoke forth the word of God. While every true prophet spoke forth God's Word not every one spoke of the future. The title "prophet" has the main idea of receiving and delivering of the message of God on any subject.

THE PROPHET SPEAKS ONLY WHAT THE LORD SPEAKS

The prophets were spokesmen for the Lord. They spoke to the people on behalf of God.

The Lord said to Moses,

Deut 18 v18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. v19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. v20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak

in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. v21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? v22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

The prophets spoke what the Lord said to them. The Old Testament prophets spoke the words of God. God told Ezekiel,

Ezekiel 2 v7 And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.

Amos wrote, :-

*Amos 3: vv7,8 v7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his **servants the prophets.** v8 The lion hath roared, who will not fear? **the Lord GOD hath spoken,** who can but prophesy?*

Balaam the prophet said, :-

*Numbers 22 v8 And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the **LORD shall speak unto me:** and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.*

The biblical prophets unanimously testified that the words they spoke were not their own but were ultimately derived from the Lord.

THE PROPHETS DID NOT UNDERSTAND ALL THAT THEY PROPHESED

1Peter 1 v10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: v11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. v12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

It is clear as we read the gospels that Jewish scholars did not understand two adverts of Christ. His suffering. His glory

GOD'S WAY OF DESIGNATING PROPHETS AND SPEAKING WITH MOSES

The Bible states that God's way of designating prophets was through visions and dreams.

*Numbers 12 vv 6-8 v6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a **vision**, and will speak unto him in a **dream.** v7 My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. v8 With him will I **speak mouth to mouth**, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?*

WHO WERE THE PROPHETS?

THE OLD COVENANT HAD DIFFERENT KINDS OF INSTRUCTORS...

1. **Moses**, the lawgiver - Neh 8:1,14; 9:13-14; Jn 1:17; 7:19
2. **Priests**, administrators of the law - Lev 10: 8-11; Hos 4:6; Eze 22:26; Mal 2:7
3. **Wise women**, who gave counsel - 2Sa 14:1-24; 20:16-22
4. **Psalmists, poets** who were the "sweet singers" of Israel cf. 2Sa 23:1; 1Chr 6:33
5. **Prophets**, communicators of the Word of God 2 Kings 21.10

THE PROPHETS ARE DESCRIBED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS

The Bible describes the biblical prophets in a number of ways. They include the following:

The prophet is called **a man of God** (1 Samuel 2:27).

The prophet is **a servant and messenger of the Lord** (Isaiah 42:19).

The prophet was called **a seer** (Isaiah 30:10).

The prophet was **a man of the Spirit** or "inspired man" (Hosea 9:7).

The prophet was **a watchman for the people** (Ezekiel 3:17). Isaiah 21.12

NOT ALL PROPHETS HELD PROPHETIC OFFICE

Not all people who prophesied held the office of a prophet. For example, David was a king who also made prophetic utterances. The Bible says,

2 Samuel 23:1,2 v1 Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, v2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue

*Acts Ch 2 v29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. v30 Therefore **being** a **prophet**, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; v31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.*

Although Daniel was a leader in the Babylonian government, The Lord Jesus called him a prophet:

*Matthew 24: v15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the **prophet**, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)*

THERE WAS A GROUP KNOWN AS THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS

Scripture speaks of a group or sons of the prophets.

2 Kings 2: v3 And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

THERE MAY HAVE BEEN AN OFFICIAL REGISTRY OF PROPHETS

There seemed to be an official registry of the Old Testament prophets.

*The Lord said in Ezekiel 13: v9 JND. And my hand shall be against the prophets that see vanity and that divine lies: they shall not be in the council of my people, neither shall they be written in the **register** of the house of Israel, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord Jehovah.*

While this could be referring to an official registry of prophets, it may simply refer to those who were God's genuine people as opposed to the false prophets who would not qualify.

SOME PROPHETS RECORDED THEIR PROPHECIES

Sometimes the prophets were told to write down the things that God had revealed to them. God told Isaiah to write down certain things:

Isaiah 8: v1 1 And Jehovah said to me, Take thee a great tablet, and write thereon with a man's style, concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz. (the spoil speedeth; the prey hasteth")

Again the Lord said,

*Isaiah 30: v8 Now go, write it before them on a **tablet**, and record it in a book, that it may be for the time to come, as a witness for ever, v9 that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; v10 who say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits; v11 get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us!*

Jeremiah was told to write,

*Jeremiah 36: v28 **Take thee again another roll**, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned.*

The Lord said of Jeremiah's writings:

Jeremiah 25: v13 And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.

Daniel wrote down a dream that God had given him:

Daniel 7: v1 *In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream; he told the sum of the matters.*

We also find the prophet Habakkuk commanded to write:

Habakkuk 2: v2 *And Jehovah answered me and said, Write the vision, and engrave it upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it.*

NO ONE WAS ALLOWED TO CHANGE EVEN ONE WORD

The people were commanded not to change even one word that God had revealed to them.

The Lord said to Moses.

Deuteronomy 4: v2 *Ye shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall ye take from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you.*

Consequently the people were given no authority to originate Scripture. They were ordered to keep the commandments that the LORD had given. This implies their ability to exactly identify those commandments to which they were to be obedient.

SOME OF THE WRITINGS WERE PRESERVED

The writings of the prophets were to be preserved. They were placed in the tabernacle and then later in the temple. They were to be preserved for future generations. See Deut 31 vv 24-26. Books of the Law placed beside the ark

Moses said to the people,

Deuteronomy 6: vv1,2. v1 *And these are the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances, which Jehovah your God commanded to teach you, that ye may do them in the land whereunto ye pass over to possess it, v2 that thou mayest fear Jehovah thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.*

KINGS MUST OBEY THE PROPHET**The Scripture also commanded how the king was to relate to Scripture:**

Deut 17. v18 *JND. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: v19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:*

This passage was written about five hundred years before Israel had its first king. The Law of Moses anticipated the office of the king and commanded how the king should view the written Word of God. The King was not allowed to tamper with the Scripture. He, like everyone else, was to be under the authority of the written Word of God.

SOMETIMES THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS WAS SENT ELSEWHERE

At times, the message of the prophet was sent to another place.

We read in Jeremiah,

Jeremiah 29: v1 *Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon;*

Elijah sent a letter to king Jehoram

2 Chronicles 21: v12 *And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah,*

THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS WAS ALSO READ OUT LOUD

Baruch read Jeremiah's message out loud to the people.

Jeremiah 36: v8. *And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the LORD in the LORD'S house.*

THERE WERE FALSE PROPHETS WHO EXISTED

While God raised up His true prophets, He also warns of the existence of false prophets:

Deuteronomy 18: v20 *But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.*

God judged the false prophets during the time of Moses:

Numbers 26: v10 *And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign. (Took place in Ch 16)*

God also judged the false prophets of Baal:

1 Kings 18 v40 *And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.*

2Peter 2. False Prophets

TESTS OF A TRUE PROPHET

RECEPTION.

Numbers 12 v6 *And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream*

FULLFILLMENT.

Deut 18 v20 *But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. v21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? v22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.*

ALIGNMENT.

Deut 13. v1 *If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, v2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; v3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS CONTINUED UNTIL JOHN THE BAPTIST

Jesus said in Matt 11.v13 *"For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John"* (John was the last of the Old Testament prophets. When Christ came a new prophetic era began.

SUMMARY OF PROPHETS

The Old Testament recognizes a number of people known as prophets. These people spoke in the place of the Lord. Their words were God's words when they were speaking for the Lord. God's way of designating prophet was by way of visions and dreams. They were called such things as a "**man of God**," a "**servant or messenger of the Lord**," a "**seer**" a "**man of the spirit**" and a "**watchman**." However, not everyone who prophesied held the office of a prophet. David, the king, and Daniel the statesman, were called prophets even though they did not hold the prophetic office.

The Old Testament also spoke of a group of prophets. They may have been recorded on an official registry of prophets.

The prophets not only spoke the Word of the Lord, but some of them committed their prophecies to writing. The prophets wrote down the things that God had revealed to them and their writings were preserved for future generations.

All the people, including the king, were commanded not to change the words that the prophets wrote. At times the words of the prophets were sent elsewhere and read out loud to the people. Obedience was always expected.

Along with the genuine prophets were a number of false prophets. They were severely judged for prophesying falsely.

The Old Testament prophets continued until John the Baptist – he was the last prophet of the Old Era. Christ Jesus brought in a new age of prophetic truth.

MINOR PROPHETS

The last twelve books of the Old Testament are referred to as the Minor Prophets. Their books are considered minor since each is much shorter than the writings of Isaiah (sixty-six chapters), Jeremiah (fifty-two chapters), and Ezekiel (forty-eight chapters). If all of their writings were combined into a single book, it would be only two-thirds of the size of the book of Isaiah

Daniel, although it contains important prophecies from Daniel's time to the end of the age and Christ's return, is generally not considered part of the writings of the prophets. This may be because Daniel wrote in Babylon during the Jews' 70-year exile in captivity due to their sins.

As with all of the prophets of God, the common themes of the minor prophets are judgment and restoration. Some cover one theme more than another. While these writings vary a great deal in size, they follow a general pattern:

- I. Warning of judgment due to sin**
- II. A description of the sin**
- III. The coming judgment**
- IV. A call for repentance**
- V. The promise of future restoration**

THE PROPHETS SPOKE OF

GOD'S holiness This is spoken of more than GOD'S love.

GOD's Purposes for the future

GOD'S faithfulness seen in His covenants with Israel

The Scriptures speak of **seven different covenants**, four of which (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Mosaic, Davidic) God made with the nation of Israel. Of those four, three are unconditional in nature; that is, regardless of Israel's obedience or disobedience, God still will fulfill these covenants with Israel. One of the covenants, the Mosaic Covenant, is conditional in nature. That is, this covenant will bring either blessing or cursing depending on Israel's obedience or disobedience.

Three of the covenants (Adamic, Noahic, New) are made between God and mankind in general, and are not limited to the nation of Israel.

FOUR COVENANTS WITH ISRAEL

Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3, 6-7; 13:14-17; 15; 17:1-14; 22:15-18). In this covenant, God promised many things to Abraham. He personally promised that He would make Abraham's name great (Genesis 12:2), that Abraham would have numerous physical descendants (Genesis 13:16), and that he would be the father of a multitude of nations (Genesis 17:4-5). God also made promises regarding a nation called Israel. In fact, the geographical boundaries of the Abrahamic Covenant are laid out on more than one occasion in the book of Genesis (12:7; 13:14-15; 15:18-21). Another provision in the Abrahamic Covenant is that the families of the world will be blessed through the physical line of Abraham (Genesis 12:3; 22:18). This is a reference to the Messiah, who would come from the line of Abraham.

Mosaic Covenant (Deuteronomy 11; et al.). The Mosaic Covenant was a conditional covenant that either brought God's direct blessing for obedience or God's direct cursing for disobedience upon the nation of Israel. Part of the Mosaic Covenant was the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and the rest of the Law, which contained over 600 commands—roughly 300 positive and 300 negative. The history books of the Old Testament (Joshua–Esther) detail how Israel succeeded at obeying the Law or how Israel failed miserably at obeying the Law. Deuteronomy 11:26-28 details the blessing/cursing conditions from God

Palestinian Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:1-10). The Palestinian Covenant, or Land Covenant, amplifies the land aspect that was detailed in the Abrahamic Covenant. According to the terms of this covenant, if the people disobeyed, God would cause them to be scattered around the world (Deuteronomy 30:3-4), but He would eventually restore the nation (verse 5). When the nation is restored, then they will obey Him perfectly (verse 8), and God will cause them to prosper (verse 9).

Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:8-16). The Davidic Covenant amplifies the “seed” aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant. The promises to David in this passage are significant. God promised that David's lineage would last forever and that his kingdom would never pass away permanently (verse 16). Obviously, the Davidic throne has not been in place at all times. There will be a time, however, when someone from the line of David will again sit on the throne and rule as king. This future king is Jesus (Luke 1:32-33).

THREE OTHER COVENANTS

The Adamic Covenant can be thought of in two parts: the **Edenic Covenant** (innocence) and the **Adamic Covenant** (grace) (Genesis 3:16-19).

The Edenic Covenant is found in Genesis 1:26-30; 2:16-17. The Edenic Covenant outlined man's responsibility toward creation and God's directive regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Adamic Covenant included the curses pronounced against mankind for the sin of Adam and Eve, as well as God's provision for that sin (Genesis 3:15).

The Noachic Covenant was an unconditional covenant between God and Noah (specifically) and humanity (generally). After the Flood, God promised humanity that He would never again destroy all life on earth with a Flood (see Genesis chapter 9). God gave the rainbow as the sign of the covenant, a promise that the entire earth would never again flood and a reminder that God can and will judge sin (2 Peter 2:5).

New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The New Covenant is a covenant made first with the nation of Israel and, ultimately, with all mankind. In the New Covenant, God promises to forgive sin, and there will be a universal knowledge of the Lord. Jesus Christ came to fulfill the Law of Moses (Matthew 5:17) and create a new covenant between God and His people. Now that we are under the New Covenant, both Jews and Gentiles can be free from the penalty of the Law. We are now given the opportunity to receive salvation as a free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Old Testament history ends with Nehemiah. (BC 446-434) The balance of the scriptures fit into that period

The minor prophets may be classified two different ways. One is by time period based upon the exile. The other is by their audience. This latter category actual has three groups – the Northern Kingdom, the Southern Kingdom, and those who return to Israel after the exile.

Group	Book.	Date	Message
Pre-exilic to Israel.	Jonah.	780-750	Judgment on Nineveh
	Amos.	765-750	Social Righteousness, Abused Privelege
	Hoseah.	755-715.	Gods Love

Nineveh	Joel	835-796.	Judgment & salvation, Day of the Lord
Pre-Exilic to Judah	Obadiah.	840	Judgment on Edom
	Micah.	740-690.	Justice, mercy, & love
	Nahum.	630-612.	Fall of Nineveh
	Zephaniah.	625	The Day of the Lord & Blessings
	Habakkuk.	606-604.	God's slackness in judgment
Post-Exilic	Haggai.	520	Exhortation to rebuild Temple
	Zechariah.	515	Exhortation to rebuild Temple
	Malachi.	430	True worship & sanctity of marriage

HOW ARE THE PROPHETS CLASSIFIED?

WE MAY ALSO SPEAK OF "ORAL" AND "LITERARY" PROPHETS...

- The "oral" prophets left no writings bearing their names
 - Such as Elijah and Elisha - cf. 1Ki 17; 2Ki 2
 - Nathan (2Sa 12), Gad (2 Sam 24:11), Ahijah (1Ki 11:29)
- Those who left books bearing their names are called the "literary" prophets

THE LITERARY PROPHETS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Please note: Dating the prophets is not without controversy, and with some it can be very difficult. What is provided below are the estimates among many conservative scholars...

NINTH CENTURY (EARLY ASSYRIAN PERIOD)

- Obadiah (845 B.C)
- Joel (830 B.C.)?
- Jonah (790-750 B.C.)
 - This is during the period of "The Divided Kingdom" in Israel' history; to the north and east the empire of Assyria was beginning to make its presence known in Israel

EIGHTH CENTURY (ASSYRIAN PERIOD)

- Amos (755 B.C.)
 - Hosea (750-725 B.C.)
 - Isaiah (740-700 B.C.)
 - Micah (735-700 B.C.)
- In 722 B.C., the northern kingdom of Israel was taken into Assyrian captivity; these prophets were proclaiming God's message as the nation was being threatened from the north

SEVENTH CENTURY (CHALDEAN PERIOD)

- Jeremiah (626-586 B.C.)
 - Zephaniah (630-625 B.C.)
 - Nahum (625-612 B.C.)
 - Habakkuk (625-605 B.C.)
- Assyria was eventually defeated by Babylon; these prophets served as God's messengers when the Babylonian empire threatened the kingdom of Judah

SIXTH CENTURY (THE EXILE)

- Ezekiel (593-570 B.C.)
 - Daniel (605-536 B.C.)
- Like many of their countrymen, these prophets were taken into Babylonian captivity; from Babylon they served as God's messengers to both captives and kings

SIXTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES (POST-EXILIC PERIOD)

1. Haggai (520 B.C.)
2. Zechariah (520-518 B.C.)
3. Malachi (440 B.C.)

-- After the Jews were allowed to return home from Babylonian captivity, God used Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the people to rebuild the temple; later, Malachi was used to reform the priesthood during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah

UNDERSTANDING THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS**3 THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND AS YOU STUDY THE PROPHETS...**

1. Seek to understand the political, social and religious conditions of the times
 - a. Any interpretation must consider how the message was relevant for the people to whom the prophet spoke
 - b. Secondary fulfillment of prophecy is often found in the NT, but this can be understood only when applied by inspired writers of the NT
 - c. Guard against making interpretations that are purely speculative
 - d. Any application to modern events must be carefully harmonized in light of the NT
2. Consider God's relation to the heathen nations (i.e., other than Israel and Judah)
 - a. The prophets often revealed how God directed their destiny and judged them
 - b. This may provide insight as to how God rules the nations today!
 - cf. Mt 28:18; Rev 1:5; 2:26;27
3. Note any teaching regarding the Messiah and His coming kingdom. - Ac 26:6-7; 28:20
 - a. The immediate mission of most prophets was to save God's people from idolatry and wickedness
 - b. Failing that, they were sent to announce God's judgment and the coming destruction of the nation
 - c. Many prophets left a message of hope for the future, regarding the Messiah who would come and establish a kingdom that could never be destroyed!

SOME OF THE GREAT THEMES DEVELOPED BY THE PROPHETS...

1. The holiness of God - He is absolutely pure, righteous, just, merciful, tender, loving, and longsuffering
2. The **sovereignty** of God - He rules the universe and is above all
3. The **immutability** of God's word
 - a. He carries out His promises
 - b. One can depend upon Him to act consistently with His Word
4. The **terribleness** of sin
 - a. God abhors iniquity, and will not tolerate, overlook, nor excuse it
 - b. God is willing to forgive those who humbly repent
5. **Repentance and righteousness**
 - a. This is the clarion call of the prophets
 - b. Though God's punishment of the wicked is severe, yet God's mercy is great in loving kindness upon those who are of broken spirit and contrite heart
6. **The worship due God** - The proper reverence, awe, and respect for God will cause one to worship, praise Him and give thanks for His wonderful grace and mercy!

CONCLUSION

Why study "The Minor Prophets"? Because in them we learn about...

- 1). The nature of God, His holiness, justice, righteousness and mercy
- 2). The workings of God, as He dealt with nations, bringing judgment upon the guilty, which can help us in our relationship with God today, giving us comfort and hope to face the future, knowing that God is in ultimate control!
- 3). Prophecies fulfilled in the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ
- 4). Prophecies yet to be fulfilled in a future day

Christ in His person or activities seen in the Minor Prophets

See list at end of notes

When the Lord Jesus reviewed the entire Old Testament in one sermon (Luke 24:27), He probably referred to some of these verses that prophesied His first and second coming.

1. **Hosea** (Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15). Christ will return as a child from Egypt like Israel.
2. **Joel** (Joel 3:2, 12 and Revelation 14:14-20). Christ will return to the valley of Jehoshaphat at His Second Coming.
3. **Amos** (Amos 9:11-15). Christ will restore the entire nation of Israel.
4. **Obadiah** (Obadiah vv15-21). Christ will judge all nations.
5. **Jonah** (Ch1:17). Christ Jesus likened Himself only to this prophet in Matt 12:39-41).
6. **Micah** (Ch 5:2). Christ will be born in Bethlehem predicted 700 years before (Mtt 2:5-6).
7. **Nahum** (Nahum 1:2-8). Christ is the holy Judge of the nations.
8. **Habakkuk** (Habakkuk 2:14). Christ will return and be known by all.
9. **Zephaniah** (Zeph 3:9-20). Christ will dwell among His people in the future Kingdom.
10. **Haggai** (Haggai 2:20-23). Christ will judge future Gentile nations.
11. **Zechariah** (Zechariah 3:1-2; 3:8; 3:9, 6:12-13; 9:9-10; 10:4; 11:4-13; 12:10; 13:1; 13:7; 14). Christ will come to die and return to reign.
12. **Malachi** (Malachi 3:1-5). Christ and His forerunner will come.

The Coming Messiah.

The Minor Prophets paint a rich picture of the coming Messiah. Many facets of the Messiah are brought out in the prophetic passages concerning him: His humanity, His deity, His character, His actions.

The New Testament is crucial to discovering which passages are actually Messianic and avoiding undue allegorizing or finding invalid types.

Methodology

One must determine what methodology should be used to determine which passages should be understood as Messianic. Historically, many Christians have gone overboard in finding Christ in the Old Testament. Hengstenberg states,

"The true principle, that Christ was the central point of the whole of the Old Testament, and especially of prophecy . . . was falsely applied, and the attempt was frequently made to discover direct allusions to Him, where context and the usages of the language were both unfavorable, either by literal or historical interpretation."

It is true that the New Testament writers identify Messianic prophecies in passages that do not seem to be such in their grammatical-historical Old Testament context. For instance, Matthew states that Hosea 11:1--"out of Egypt I called my son"--was fulfilled by Jesus' parents fleeing with him to live in Egypt during Herod's lifetime. The Old Testament context, however, is clearly referring to the nation Israel. The Holy Spirit through Matthew has identified a deeper meaning or significance.

Interpretations not apparent in the Old Testament context can only be drawn out by the divine author of the text, the Holy Spirit. Only He knows when a deeper meaning or significance is intended; therefore, the controlling factor in one's methodology of identifying Messianic prophecies or types must be the Scriptures themselves. If further revelation does not indicate a Messianic interpretation, then one must be hesitant to do so. A general survey of Messianic prophecies in the Minor Prophets must limit itself to those passages identified as Messianic by Scripture.

The Humanity of Messiah

The Messianic prophecies of the Minor Prophets clearly portray the Messiah as a man. Micah 5:2 indicates that this one who will be ruler in Israel will come from Bethlehem (Mt. 2:5-6; Lk. 2:4, 11).

Zechariah indicates He will ride on a colt at some point (Zech. 9:9; cf. Mt. 21:5; Mk. 11:7, 9; Lk. 19:38; Jn. 12:15).

Zechariah 6:12 and 13:7 explicitly call him a man.

Zechariah states He will sit on a throne and be a priest (Zech. 6:13).

In Zechariah one of the titles given the Messiah in Zech Ch 3:8 is "Branch." Isaiah and Jeremiah previously used this title. The "Branch" is the descendant of Jesse (Is. 11:1) and the descendant of David (Jer. 23:5).

The Deity of the Messiah

In Micah 5:2, the Messiah/Ruler who comes from Bethlehem is described as one "*whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.*"

The title "Branch" in Zechariah brings to mind that he is called "Yahweh our righteousness" in Jeremiah 23:6. Cf 1John 2.1

In Micah 5:4 "he is represented as so intimately connected with God, that the whole fulness of the divine strength and majesty is His. Cf Heb 1.3

In Zechariah 12:10 the piercing of Yahweh is the piercing of the Messiah (Jn. 19:34, 37; Rev. 1:7).

In Malachi 3:1 the coming of the Messiah is the coming of the Lord himself. cf Luke 7 vv19-20

The Messiah's Characteristics and Actions

Christ as Messiah is also a Priest, a King, a Humble Servant, and a Suffering Victim. He brings Righteousness, Peace, and Salvation.

Messiah the Priest-King

The Messiah is portrayed as a great ruler. In Hosea 3:5 he is called "David [Israel's] king." Other passages affirm that this is a reference to the Messiah—the Son of David—rather than to the historical David himself. For instance, in speaking of the Millennial Kingdom, Ezekiel 37:21-28 says, "*One king shall be king over them all*" (v22); "David my servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd" (v24); "My servant David shall be their prince forever" (v25).[v6] This "David" will be the sole ruler of the Millennial Kingdom. He is the Messianic king who fulfills the Davidic covenant (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Psalm 132:11-18).

Micah 5:2-5 also portrays the Messiah as a great ruler. He is called "the one to be ruler in Israel" (2). As the king he shepherds the flock "in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God". He will not be Israel's ruler only, for "he shall be great to the ends of the earth". [v7] It was the quotation of this passage to Herod by the chief priests and scribes that moved him to destroy all the babies in Bethlehem for fear of this Messianic king by whom his own kingship was threatened (Ch2:vv1-18).

Zechariah's reference to the Messiah as the "Branch" carries kingly connotations also (Zech. 3:8; 6:12-13). Years earlier, Jeremiah identified the Branch as a Davidic king who would "reign and prosper and execute justice and righteousness in the earth" (Jer. 23:5-6).

Zechariah writes that the Branch will "sit and rule on his throne" (6:13). He also calls the Messiah Jerusalem's king (Ch9: v9).

Zechariah 6:12-13 reveals that the Messiah--besides being a king--will also be a priest. [8] He will "sit and rule on his throne; so he shall be a priest on his throne." He combines the offices of king and priest. He will not only rule the nations, but he will intercede between God and humanity. The letter to the Hebrews shows that Jesus Christ currently acts as the High Priest between believers and God (2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; chs. 5-10).

Messiah the Lowly Suffering Servant

In Zechariah 3:8 he is called God's servant. He is completely subject to the will of Yahweh. He is lowly not only before God, but also before men. He comes from Bethlehem, an insignificant village (Micah 5:2) and from Egypt (Hosea 3:5). Zechariah calls on Jerusalem to look on her coming king and observe paradoxically that he is "lowly and riding on a donkey" (9:9). He is valued at the price of a mere thirty pieces of silver, the price of a gored slave in ancient Israel (Zech. 11:12-13; Ex. 21:32). The LORD calls on the sword to awake against his shepherd the Messiah. This refers to a violent, bloody execution. The Messiah-King will be brutally killed at the LORD's bidding, causing his sheep to scatter (Zech. 13:7). In conjunction with the LORD's calling for the Messiah's execution, it is stated that the Jews are those who will pierce him (Zech. 12:10).

Christ fulfilled these prophecies at his first coming. Zechariah 9:9 was literally fulfilled when Jesus rode into Jerusalem sitting on a donkey (Mt. 21:1-11; Mk. 11:1-10; Lk. 19:29-40; Jn. 12:12-16).

Zechariah 11:13 was literally fulfilled when the chief priests paid Judas 30 pieces of silver to betray Jesus and later bought the potter's field with the money (Mt. 26:14-15; 27:3-10).

Christ's crucifixion and his disciples' scattering fulfilled the prophecy about the Messiah-shepherd being executed and the flock being scattered (Zech 13v7) (Mt. 26:31, 56; Mk. 14:27).

His burial is signified by Jonah's three days and nights in the belly of the great sea-creature (Jonah 1:17; Mt. 12:40; 16:4).[11]

Righteousness, Peace, and Salvation

The Messiah is characterized as righteous and just. He is called God's servant (Zech. 3:7) and companion (fellow) (Zech. 13:7), both of which imply righteousness.

More directly, Zechariah 9:9 states emphatically, "He is just." A major connotation of his being called the "Branch" (Zech. 3:8; 6:12) is his righteousness. Isaiah spoke of the Branch as one who would judge with righteousness and equity, having righteousness as his belt (Is. 11:3-5). Jeremiah called him the "Branch of righteousness" who executes justice (Jer. 23:5). The Messiah is righteous in a way and to a degree that no other man has ever been. He is none other than Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God whose righteousness alone is acceptable to God.

The Messiah brings peace. Micah 5:5 identifies him as the personification of peace. He will speak peace to the nations according to Zechariah 9:10. Again, a connotation of being called the "Branch" is his provision of peace, for Jeremiah says that in his days Israel will dwell safely (23:6). His universal reign as king will bring universal peace to the earth.

He will also bring peace between God and man—that is, salvation. Zechariah 9:9 states clearly that the just, lowly king who will enter Jerusalem on a donkey brings **salvation** with him.

When Israel looks to the one they pierced, a fountain will be opened for sin and uncleanness (Zech 12:10; 13:1).

Summary

Admittedly, it is much easier to see the many facets of the Messiah in the Minor Prophets in light of the New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ. Even without further revelation, however, good hermeneutics applied to the Minor Prophets would lead one to this multi-faceted perspective of the coming Messiah.

He is a man, but not a man only: he is God himself. He is a glorious, Davidic priest-king who will rule the whole earth in righteousness and peace. He will come from Bethlehem, but he is eternal. He is lowly and humble. He will be insulted and brutally executed by the Jews through the sovereign will of God; but when they look to him, he will provide salvation and the forgiveness of sins.

While it would be nice to list all the sources used to write this document, I was not diligent in recording such during my studies and to do so now would be nigh impossible. I simply extend my appreciation for all the helps received. They are indeed manifold.

CHRIST IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

Scripture	Prophecy	Fulfillment
Hos. 11:1	He would be called out of Egypt	Matthew 2:15
Hos. 13:14	He would defeat death	1Cor 15:55-57
Joel 2:32	Offer salvation to all mankind	Romans 10:9-13
Joel 3:2,12	Christ will return to the valley of Jehoshaphat at the 2nd Coming.	Rev 14:14-20).
Jonah 1:17	Death and resurrection of Christ	Matt 12:40, 16:4
Mic. 5:2a	Born in Bethlehem	Matthew 2:1-6
Mic. 5:2b	Ruler in Israel	Luke 1:33
Mic. 5:2c	From everlasting	John 8:58
Hag. 2:6-9	He would visit the second Temple	Luke 2:27-32
Hag. 2:23	Descendant of Zerubbabel	Luke 2:27-32
Zech. 3:8	God's servant	John 17:4
Zech. 6:12-13	Priest and King	Hebrews 8:1
Zech. 9:9a	Greeted with rejoicing in Jerusalem	Matthew 21:8-10
Zech. 9:9b	Beheld as King	John 12:12-13
Zech. 9:9c	The Messiah would be just	John 5:30
Zech. 9:9d	The Messiah would bring salvation	Luke 19:10
Zech. 9:9e	The Messiah would be humble	Matthew 11:29
Zech. 9:9f	Enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey	Matt 21:6-9
Zech. 10:4	The cornerstone	Ephesians 2:20
Zech. 11:4-6	At His coming, Israel to have unfit leaders.	Matt 23:1-4
Zech. 11:4-6	Rejection causes God to remove protection.	Lu 19:41-44
Zech. 11:4-6c	Rejected in favor of another king	John 19:13-15
Zech. 11:7	Ministry to "poor," the believing remnant	Mt 9:35-36
Zech. 11:8a	Unbelief forces Messiah to reject them	Mt 23:33
Zech. 11:8b	Despised	Matt 27:20
Zech. 11:9.	Stops ministering to those who rejected Him	Mt 13:10-11
Zech. 11:10-11.	Rejection causes God to remove protection	Lu 19:41-44
Zech. 11:10-11b	The Messiah would be God	John 14:7
Zech. 11:12-13a.	Betrayed for thirty pieces of silver	Matt 26:14-15
Zech. 11:12-13b.	Rejected	Matt 26:14-15
Zech. 11:12-13	30 Pieces of silver cast in the house of the Lord	Mt 27:3-5
Zech. 11:12-13d.	The Messiah would be God	John 12:45

Zech. 12:10a	The Messiah's body would be pierced.	John 19:34-37
Zech. 12:10b	The Messiah would be both God and man.	John 10:30
Zech. 12:10c	The Messiah would be rejected	John 1:11
Zech. 13:7a	God's will He die for mankind	John 18:11
Zech. 13:7b	A violent death	Mark 14:27
Zech. 13:7c	Both God and man	John 14:9
Zech. 13:7d.	Israel scattered as a result of rejecting Him	Mt 26:31-56
Zech. 14:4.	He would return to the Mt. of Olives	Acts 1:11-12
Mal. 3:1a	Messenger to prepare the way for Messiah	Mark 1:1-8
Mal. 3:1b	Sudden appearance at the temple	Mark 11:15-16
Mal. 3:1c	Messenger of the new covenant	Luke 4:43
Mal. 3:6	The God who changes not	Heb 13:8
Mal. 4:5	Forerunner in spirit of Elijah	Mt. 3:1-3, 11:10-14, 17:11-13
Mal. 4:6	Forerunner would turn many to righteousness.	Luke 1:16-17