

## *Major Messages from the Minor Prophets*

Studies in the Minor Prophets

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Jersey Shore Baptist Church

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### ***Introduction to the Minor Prophets***

#### **Introduction**

The Old Testament is comprised of 39 separate Books.

#### **Historical Section**

The first 17 Books are referred to as the historical section, which further divides into two more sections. The first five Books are known as the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy), which is also commonly referred to as The Books of the Law, or The Books of Moses. The rest of the historical section of the Old Testament begins with Joshua and ends with Esther.

#### **Poetic Section**

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes make up the middle section of the Old Testament Books.

#### **Prophetic Section**

The last section of the Old Testament is the prophetic section, which also divides into two sections: The Major Prophets (5 Books - Isaiah through Daniel), and The Minor Prophets (12 Books - Hosea through Malachi)

It is critical to remember that The Minor Prophets are not designated as minor for any other reason than the size of the works. They are smaller when compared to the larger writings of The Major Prophets. Though these Minor Prophets may be small in size, they are very large in Truth, and they are not to be discounted as inferior, or less important than other portions of the Word of God. They are just as much Bible as any other part of The Bible.

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew Bible, which corresponds exactly to the Old Testament in everything except the order of the Books, is also made up of three sections – The Law – The Prophets – and The Writings. However, in the Hebrew Bible the Minor Prophets are combined together into one book, called The Twelve. This book is then divided into twenty-one equal sections, according to size; not according to content or context.

It is critical when studying The Minor Prophets, or any other passage of Scripture, that the historical, geographic, and prophetic contexts are considered. We need to know whom the prophet was writing to, and at what period of time in Israel / Judah's history was the book written.

Examples:

*"Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong." - (Joel 3:10)*

*"And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." - (Micah 4:3)*

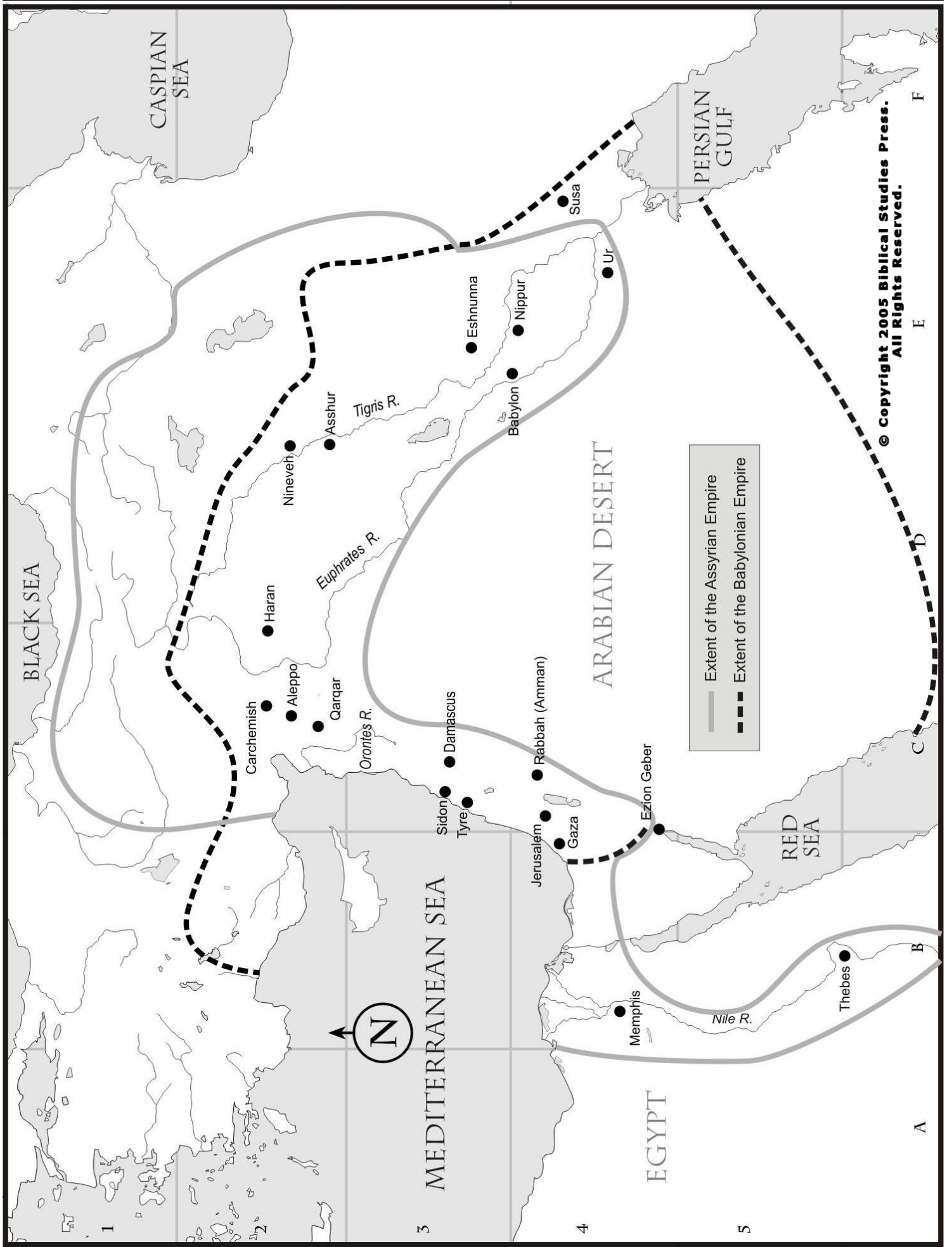
These are not contradictions: Joel is writing prophetically in reference to the Battle of Armageddon, but Micah is speaking of the future Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

A general understanding of Israel's history is very important when considering these Books of the Bible:

Israel was a united kingdom during the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon; but beginning with the reign of Rehoboam, the kingdom split in two: the northern kingdom of Israel, and the southern kingdom of Judah. Israel was plagued with all evil kings who led them into idolatry and immorality, and when God's patience finally ran out, the Assyrians took them into captivity in 722 BC. We also need to understand what period of time prophetically the writer is dealing with. A wrong understanding of context will lead to wrong interpretation.

The southern Kingdom of Judah endured many bad kings as well, but also had a few good ones. Though they experienced times of great apostasy like their northern neighbor, they also enjoyed some times of great revival. However, by 586 BC, the nation was once again steeped in idolatry, and immorality; and God caused them to be taken into captivity as well, this time by the Babylonians.

All throughout Israel's history, both before and after their captivity, God sent them prophets to get their attention, to warn them, to scold them, and sometimes even to encourage them about things to come. Contrary to commonly held misconceptions, a study of The Minor Prophets will not be boring, but rather very rewarding, as well as challenging and exciting.



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The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, 924 to 722 B.C.



## CHRONOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

<u>Prophet</u>	<u>Date of Ministry</u>	<u>Kingdom &amp; King(s)</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
Obadiah	848-841 B.C.	Judah - Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah	2 Kings 8-12 2 Chronicles 21-24
Joel	835-796 B.C.	Judah - Joash	2 Kings 12 2 Chronicles 24
Jonah	782-753 B.C.	Israel - Jeroboam II	2 Kings 14
Amos	760-753 B.C.	Israel - Jeroboam II	2 Kings 14
Hosea	755-710 B.C.	Israel - Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, Hoshea	2 Kings 14-17
Isaiah	740-680 B.C.	Judah - Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh	2 Kings 15-21 2 Chronicles 26-33
Micah	735-700 B.C.	Judah - Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah	2 Kings 15-20 2 Chronicles 27-32
Nahum	664-654 B.C.	Judah - Manasseh	2 Kings 21-23 2 Chronicles 33-35
Zephaniah	632-628 B.C.	Judah - Josiah	2 Kings 22-23 2 Chronicles 34-35
Jeremiah	627-580 B.C.	Judah - Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah Babylon - Nebuchadnezzar	2 Kings 22-25 2 Chronicles 34-36
Habakkuk	609-605 B.C.	Judah - Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim	2 Kings 22-24 2 Chronicles 34-36
Daniel	605-535 B.C.	Judah - Jehoiakim Babylon - Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar Persia - Darius I, Cyrus	2 Kings 23-25 2 Chronicles 36 Ezra 1-4
Ezekiel	593-571 B.C.	Judah - Zedekiah Babylon - Nebuchadnezzar	2 Kings 24-25 2 Chronicles 36
Haggai	520 B.C.	Persia - Zerubbabel, Darius I	Ezra 5-6
Zechariah	520-480 B.C.	Persia - Zerubbabel, Darius I, Xerxes	Ezra 5-6
Malachi	432-425 B.C.	Persia - Artaxerxes, Darius II	Nehemiah 13

