

OUTLINE STUDIES IN THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

by

Prof. William G. Moorehead

Copyright © 1893

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

THE MINOR PROPHETS

The arrangement of the twelve minor prophets in a sense chronological; that is, the earlier are put at the beginning, the later at the end of the collection. The order of time, however, is not observed with strict exactness; for Joel and Jonah are probably the oldest of the twelve. By whom the collection was made is somewhat difficult to determine, though the constant tradition that Ezra particularly, and probably also Nehemiah and Malachi, had very much to do in forming the canon, has never been successfully contradicted.

The great theme of these prophets is Israel primarily, then the nations that were either the foes of Israel, or were used of God for the punishment of His disobedient people. Nowhere do we find sin rebuked with more awful severity, the true meaning of the law more clearly expounded, or the future glory of Zion more confidently predicted.

Israel's relation to God, the binding force of the Mosaic legislation, and the apostasy of the people from the Lord and their transgression of the law given at Sinai—these and the like fundamental truths afford the ground for the indictment against the chosen people, as also the ground of the appeals to them to repent and return to God. But while they denounced sin and announced judgment, they foretold the glory of the latter days, the regathering of scattered Israel, the rebuilding of David's fallen Tabernacle, the coming of Messiah the second time, and the blessedness of the millennial age.

Wrath is not the main topic of the Minor Prophets any more than it is of the major. God's love and pity, His yearning over the wayward people, His desire so often expressed to comfort and bless them, are prominent features of these books, as of the whole Bible. It is impossible to read it with any attention without perceiving this central truth.

It was a special function of the Minor Prophets to minister to the faith and hope of the few loyal souls who still clung to the truth of God, and who worshipped Him in sincerity. The faithful remnant is found in these books as likewise in the greater prophets. God never forgets those who are true to Him. He always has some special word, some sweet and tender promise and message of comfort for them. Hence we find in these prophecies the presence of the remnant and communications addressed particularly to them.

These twelve books may be classified into four groups, with three in each group.

1. *Hosea, Amos, and Micah, who speak of the fall of Israel (Samaria), and of the overthrow that already threatened Judah.*

They pronounce judgment on the people, while unfolding with more or less fulness the dealings of God in grace at the end. With the exception of Amos, who prophesied in the early reign of Uzziah, they belong to the times of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

2. *Obadiah, Jonah, and Nahum, who prophesy against certain Gentile nations; mainly Edom and Nineveh.*

3. *Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, who were post-captivity prophets, the first two dealing with the restored exiles, and the last bearing witness to the failure of the people and the coming of Messiah and His forerunner.*

4. *Joel, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, who have a peculiar character such as marks them off from the rest. They chiefly speak of the end, the closing scenes, the great crisis toward which the world is fast hastening. They are telesmatic, i. e., they deal with the last days, the great day of the Lord.*

~ end of chapter 29 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
