

MASTERING THE ENGLISH BIBLE

The Prophetic Books



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Introduction to *Mastering the English Bible*

This is one of the 11 segments of Mastering the English Bible.

Mastering the English Bible is a comprehensive survey of the Old and New Testaments, covering the Bible's full history and every book of the Bible.

It consists of the following 11 segments:

- Old Testament History Genesis to the Silent Years
- Old Testament Job to Psalms
- Old Testament Proverbs
- Old Testament Prophetic Books
- The Gospels
- Acts
- Romans to Corinthians
- Galatians to Thessalonians
- Pastoral Epistles
- General Epistles
- Revelation

Mastering the English Bible is for beginning Bible students as well as for advanced. It is for youngsters (teens and above) and oldsters. In fact, the Bible pictures can be used for children. It is for individuals, homes, and churches. It is for preachers, both for those formally educated and informally.

Mastering the English Bible is nearly a complete Bible college curriculum in one course. The aim is to educate the student in **Bible history**, **Bible times** (e.g., Egypt, ancient Babylon, the Hittites, Canaanites, Assyria, neo-Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome), **Bible interpretation** (e.g., context, comparing Scripture with Scripture, defining words, paying attention to details, understanding repetition, interpreting metaphoric language), **Bible doctrine**, **theological terms**, **Bible geography**, **Bible typology** (e.g., the Passover, the Tabernacle, the Levitical Priesthood, the Levitical offerings), **Bible culture**, **Bible biography**, **Bible archaeology**, and **Bible prophecy**. Mastering the English Bible teaches the fundamentals of the law of Moses, the Gospel, Israel, and the Church. The course aims to give the student a broad comprehension of the Bible as a whole and how each part fits into the whole.

Mastering the English Bible is very practical. There are extensive lessons on prayer, Christian growth, spiritual warfare, the husband-wife relationship, child training, evangelism, church planting, pastors, deacons, church discipline, the woman's ministry, youth discipleship, the church as a body, spiritual gifts, congregational singing, and much more.

Mastering the English Bible is accompanied by the **Way of Life Pictorial Bible**, which is an extensive series of multimedia PowerPoints packed with more than 7,500 slides featuring detailed maps, historical backgrounds, treasures from archaeology, Bible pictures, reconstructive drawings of ancient places, charts, video clips, and other visual aids. Many of these were captured by the author in the best archaeological museums in America and abroad, plus research trips to Israel, Greece, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, Europe, and England.

Mastering the English Bible is more than a Bible course. It is a philosophy that a true New Testament church is a church in which every member is a serious, lifelong Bible student. If this is not the case, the church cannot possibly be what God wants it to be. It cannot even have the congregational singing that God requires. Consider Colossians 3:16, “**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” This is a description of a true New Testament church. It is a church in which the Word of God is dwelling in the members richly, not slightly, dwelling in all wisdom, meaning that the Word of God is getting down into the daily lives and producing practical wisdom for godly Christian living.

To be a serious, lifelong Bible student is necessary for everything in the Christian life. Philip Henry, father of the Bible commentator Matthew Henry, observed, “All grace grows as love to the word of God grows.”

Mastering the English Bible is a product of 50 years of serious Bible study and teaching. The author has a passion to help God’s people become effectual Bible students, beginning at the youngest age possible. The church and the home are to work in harmony toward this objective.

Mastering the English Bible consists of video classes, textbooks, syllabi, review questions, tests, test scores, and other teaching tools. These are available to those who purchase the textbooks and register online.

The course **syllabus** is very important. It explains the course objectives, the requirements, and the student projects, and it gives a weekly timeline of what the student should accomplish and when to take the tests. It is a class schedule that can be used by teachers or by private students. For the larger courses, there are two ‘paces,’ one shorter and one longer.

No shortcut to learning the Bible

- Proverbs 2 likens the pursuit of spiritual wisdom to searching for silver. “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding” (Pr. 2:1-6).
- The effectual student has to carve out time from his daily schedule, learn how to study the Bible, obtain the necessary tools, and work at it day by day for his entire life.

Goals of Mastering the English Bible

- To give an overview of the Bible, which is the starting point for understanding it. The Bible is one Book that was planned by God in eternity before it was given to the holy prophets, and understanding the big picture is necessary to rightly understand the parts. This is why a whole Bible reading plan is essential. “It is not enough that we be familiar with great verses, or great texts, or great chapters, or great individual books. We must know the Bible as a whole, and should be familiar with the parts which make up the whole; for here is a Divine progressive revelation, in which every part is organically related to every other part; and, consequently, only by knowing the whole Bible can we worthily appreciate its greatness and experience its power. ... the synthetic method in Bible study demands that we get a mental grasp of the Bible as a whole ... In the Bible, as in biology, the whole is more than the aggregate of the parts. A living body is more than an assemblage of limbs; and the Bible is more than a collection of texts, paragraphs, chapters, or even books; it is a spiritual organism, in

The Prophets

Introduction

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The Ministry of the Prophets

The prophets were God's spokesmen (Jer. 1:9). They wrote by the moving of God's Spirit. A key New Testament verse that teaches this is 2 Pe. 1:21.

The prophets did not just describe the future. Their two-fold ministry involved both fore-telling (telling future events) and forth-telling (preaching).

The prophets revealed God. The chief purpose of Bible prophecy is to reveal God to man. In the prophets we see the character of God, both His severity and His goodness (Ro. 11:12).

The prophets prepared for the coming of the Messiah. The first Messianic prophecies were recorded in the books of Moses, beginning in Genesis 3:15.

From the days of the Judges, prophets were raised up by God to instruct and reprove Israel during periods of spiritual decline.

The Jewish prophets spoke not only to Israel, but also to the nations of the whole world (e.g., Isa. 1:2; 34:1; 42:10-12; 45:22).

“To a correct understanding of the prophetic functions, and of the writings of the prophets, however, it is necessary to bear in remembrance that the office of foretelling future events comprised only a small portion of their public duties. They were the messengers of God to His people and to the world. They were appointed to make known His will, to denounce His judgments, to rebuke the crimes of rulers and people, to instruct in the doctrines of religion, and generally to do whatever was necessary in order to effectually promulgate the will of God. The prophet was, therefore, a man who was commissioned to teach and rebuke kings and nations, as well as to predict future events” (Barnes).

The Prophets from Adam to Malachi

The ministry of prophecy has operated in the world since God made man. Men have no excuse for rejecting God, for they have had the light of prophetic revelation throughout history.

The following list of prophets from the time of Adam is adapted from Adam Clarke's commentary on Isaiah, with the addition of Abel and Oded.

Adam, the first man, has an undoubted right to stand at the head of the prophets, as he does at the head of the human race. His declaration concerning marriage, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife," is so truly prophetic, that no doubt can be formed on the subject. There was then nothing in nature or experience to justify such an assertion; and he could have it only by Divine inspiration. The millions of instances which have since occurred, and the numerous laws which have been founded on this principle among all the nations of the earth, show with what precision the declaration was conceived, and with what truth it was published to the world. Add to this, his correct knowledge of the nature of the different animals, so that he could impose on them names expressive of their respective natures or propensities; which proves that he must have acted under a Divine inspiration, for known only to God are all his works from the beginning.

Abel was a prophet. He is listed as the first prophet to be martyred (Lu. 11:50-51).

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, is expressly called a prophet; and Jude (Jud 1:14, Jud 1:15) has preserved a portion of one of his prophecies, relative to the corruption of the ante-diluvian world, and the approaching judgments of God.

Noah was a prophet and preacher of righteousness, and predicted the general deluge, and the time of respite which God in his mercy had granted to the offenders of that age.

Abraham is expressly called a prophet also, Ge. 20:7; and it appears from Ps. 105:15, that he partook of the Divine anointing.

Isaac, Ge. 27:27, predicted the future greatness of his son Jacob, and of the race that was to spring from him.

Jacob was so especially favored with the prophetic gift, that he distinctly foretold what should happen to each of his sons. See Genesis 49.

Joseph was favored with several prophetic visions, and had the gift of interpreting dreams which portended future occurrences; (see Genesis 27, 40, 41); and foretold the redemption of the Israelites from Egypt; Ge. 50:25. Thus far the prophetic influence extended through the patriarchal dispensation for about two thousand three hundred and seventy years from the creation.

Moses became one of the most eminent prophets that had ever appeared. He not only enjoyed the continual prophetic afflatus, but had such visions of and intercourse with God as no other person either before or since was favored with; and by which he was highly qualified to perform the arduous work which God had given him to do, and to frame that Code of Laws which had no equal before the promulgation of the Gospel. See De. 24:10. He predicted expressly the coming of the Messiah. See De. 18:18.

Aaron, the brother of Moses, his prime minister and God's high priest, was also a partaker of his Divine influence, and declared the will of God to Pharaoh and the Israelites, not merely from information received from Moses, but also by immediate communication from God. See Ex. 4:15.

Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, is expressly called a prophetess, Ex. 15:20; Nu. 12:2.

Joshua, who succeeded Moses, was a partaker of the same grace. He was appointed by Moses under the especial direction of God; Nu. 27:18-23; De. 34:9; and has always been reckoned among the Jews

Highlights in Isaiah

The Author of the Book of Isaiah

1. The name “Isaiah” is the Hebrew *Yesha-yahu*, meaning “Jehovah is salvation.” It is synonymous in meaning with Joshua and Hosea. *Yesha* is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek *Jesus*.

Jewish tradition says that Isaiah was closely connected to the royal family and that his father, Amoz, was the brother of King Amaziah and the uncle of Uzziah. It is clear that Isaiah had ready access to King Hezekiah (Isa. 37). “He was the historiographer at the king’s court in Jotham’s reign, and wrote accounts of the reigns of Uzziah and Hezekiah (2 Ch. 24:22; 32:32)” (J. Sidlow Baxter).

2. Isaiah was married and his wife was a prophetess (Isa. 8:3). She is one of several prophetesses mentioned in Scripture, the others being Miriam (Ex. 15:20), Deborah (Jg. 4:4), Huldah (2 Ki. 22:14), Noadiah (Ne. 6:14), Anna (Luke 2:36), and Philip’s daughters (Ac. 21:8-9).

3. He had two children who were given prophetic names: Shear-jashub (“a remnant shall return”), and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (“haste to the spoil”) (Isa. 7:3; 8:3). The children were signs to the nation of the coming judgment and of the remnant that would survive by God’s grace.

4. Isaiah was one of the most talented and influential men of history. He was a prophet, a preacher, a theologian, a social critic, a statesman who advised kings, a historian, a poet, and a psalmist.

5. Talmudic Jewish tradition says that Isaiah was martyred by Manasseh, the wicked son of Hezekiah, by being placed into a hollowed tree trunk and “sawn asunder” with a saw. The Jewish historian Josephus described Manasseh’s cruel persecutions as follows: “He barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; nor would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them, till Jerusalem was overflowed with blood.”

The Talmudic tradition about Isaiah’s death contains obvious mythical elements. Consider the account from the Babylonian Talmud:

“It is related in the Talmud that Rabbi Simeon ben ‘Azzai found in Jerusalem an account wherein it was written that Manasseh killed Isaiah. King Manasseh said to Isaiah, ‘Moses, thy master, said, There shall no man see God and live, but thou hast said, I saw the Lord seated upon his throne;’ and went on to point out other contradictions—as between Deuteronomy 4:7 and Isaiah 40:6; between Exodus 33:26 and 2 Kings 20:6. Isaiah thought: ‘I know that he will not accept my explanations; why should I increase his guilt?’ He then uttered the Unpronounceable Name, a cedar-tree opened, and Isaiah disappeared within it. Then King Manasseh ordered the cedar to be sawn asunder, and when the saw reached his mouth Isaiah died; thus was he punished for having said, ‘I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips’ (Yeb. 49b)” (cited from “Isaiah,” *Jewish Encyclopedia*).

This is typical Talmudic nonsense, which is filled with fables and repeatedly justifies the Jews from judgments pronounced by God.

The Bible says that Isaiah prophesied until the reign of Hezekiah, which was before Manasseh, though it could be that he ceased his prophetic ministry in the days of Hezekiah yet lived until Manasseh.

It has been thought by some that Hebrews 11:37 refers to Isaiah's death.

While it is possible that the Jewish tradition is based on some truth, there is no way to know for sure.

The Theme of Isaiah

The overall theme is found in Isaiah's name, which means "Jehovah's salvation." "In that one name is compressed the whole contents of the book" (Jennings). It refers to the salvation of Israel (Isa. 45:17), the salvation of the Gentiles (Isa. 45:22), and ultimately the salvation of the creation through Christ. Isaiah sees a new heaven and a new earth (Isa. 66:22).

Isaiah a Little Bible

The book of Isaiah has been called the little Bible because both Isaiah and the Bible have 66 chapters, and both are further divided into 39 chapters and 27 chapters.

In the case of the Bible, the first segment of 39 chapters, the Old Testament, emphasizes law and judgment, whereas the second segment of 27 chapters, the New Testament, emphasizes grace and redemption. The same is true for Isaiah.

Isaiah 1-39 - Warnings (the coming judgment)

Isaiah 40-66 - Grace, Comfort, and Hope (the coming kingdom)

In the middle of the last section is Isaiah 53, the prophecy of Christ's sacrificial death. This explains how the holy God can be reconciled to sinful man and why there can be hope not only for Israel but for the whole world.

The first 39 chapters of Isaiah are not wholly about judgment, and the last 27 chapters are not wholly about redemption, for redemption messages are mixed into the first 39 chapters, and judgment warnings are mixed into the last 27 chapters.

Isaiah is a "little Bible" also because it is so comprehensive. It is inexhaustible. What a wealth of revelation God has given to men!

The Historical Background of Isaiah

It is important to know the events that occurred during Isaiah's prophetic career. This helps us understand the context.

Isaiah ministered during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, a period of at least 60 years and probably more than 70 (Isa. 1:1). Though three of these kings were good, the people in general rejected God's law and worshiped idols. The nation was in a downward spiritual spiral toward complete apostasy and judgment, and Isaiah's prophecies were aimed at reproving them and calling them to repentance. In his very first prophecy, Isaiah described Israel as a "sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord" (Isa. 1:4).

KINGS OF JUDAH	KINGS OF ISRAEL
1095	Saul
1055	David
1015	Solomon
975	Rehoboam Jeroboam (975-954)
958	Abijam Nadab (954-953) Baasha (953-930) Elah (930), Zimri (929) Omri (929)
956	Asa Ahab (918-897)
914	Jehoshaphat
889	Jehoram Ahaziah (897) Jehoram (897-886)
886	Ahaziah Jehu (886-857)
886	Athaliah
879	Joash Jehoahaz (857-840)
839	Amaziah Jehoash (840-825) Jeroboam II (825-784)
810	Azariah Zechariah (784-772) Shallum (772)
	Menahem (772-761) Pekahiah (761-759) Pekah (759-730)
758	Jotham
742	Ahaz Hoshea (730-721)
726	Hezekiah Samaria besieged and destroyed by Assyria (723-721)
697	Manasseh
642	Amon
640	Josiah Jeremiah begins to prophesy
609	Jehoahaz
609	Jehoiakim 1st deportation to Babylon (606)
598	Johoiachin 2nd deportation to Babylon (597)
597	Zedekiah
586	Destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon

Isaiah's ministry began about 240 years after the division of the kingdom into the southern and northern tribes (1 Ki. 12). An idolatrous system of worship had been set up in the northern tribes (1 Ki. 12:26-33).

In Isaiah's day there was a veneer of external religion, but it was only skin deep (Isa. 1:10-15). The people thought of themselves as righteous lovers of Jehovah. The situation was very similar to that of America today. A large percentage of the people profess faith in Jesus, yet they brazenly break God's holy laws and the "Jesus" they worship is an idol of their own imagination who is a cool rock & roll guy who doesn't judge sin. Judgment and hell are rarely mentioned in American pulpits.

Partway through Isaiah's ministry, the northern tribes were carried away captive by the Assyrians and Judah was well on its way to destruction by the hands of the Babylonians. "When Isaiah came to the fore in Judah, the ten-tribe northern kingdom (Israel) was nearing its destruction by Assyria, after its apostate career of some two hundred years, under no less than nineteen kings" (J. Sidlow Baxter).

Three other writing prophets ministered during Isaiah's day, these being Jonah, Hosea, and Micah. Micah's prophecies apparently set off a revival in Hezekiah's day. See Jeremiah 26:18-19.

The major events that occurred during Isaiah's ministry are associated with the kings that reigned in Judah in his lifetime (Isa. 1:1). See the studies on Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in the segment of *Mastering the English Bible* on "The Kings of Israel."

The Divine Inspiration of Isaiah

Few books of the Bible have been attacked as viciously as Isaiah, and this is not surprising in light of its amazing Messianic prophecies. The devil hates this book.

We need to understand the attack and know how to refute it.

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, theological liberals invented the view that Isaiah was written by multiple authors. In 1795, J.C. Doederlein created the Deutero-Isaiah (two Isaiah) view, proposing that Isaiah wrote chapters 1-39, while an unknown man wrote chapters 40-66. In 1892, B. Duhm invented yet a third "Isaiah" for chapters 55-66. Since then, the number of proposed authors increased to four and seven and beyond. The theory has been continually modified, but it is still the prominent position among skeptics, and not a few "evangelicals" have been influenced by it.

This view of Isaiah is refuted by the New Testament

Isaiah is quoted in at least 23 New Testament passages, and in every case Isaiah is cited as one historic prophet and his writings are cited as divinely inspired. There are quotations from every part of Isaiah: from chapters 1, 6, 9, 10, 11, 28, 29, 40, 42, 53, 61, and 65.

- Mt. 3:3 - Isa. 40:3
- Mt. 4:14-16 - Isa. 9:1-2
- Mt. 8:17 - Isa. 53:4
- Mt. 12:17-21 - Isa. 42:1-4
- Mt. 13:14-15 - Isa. 6:9-10
- Mt. 15:7-8 - Isa. 29:13
- Mr. 7:6 - Isa. 29:13
- Mr. 15:28 - Isa. 53:12
- Lu. 3:4-6 - Isa. 40:3-5
- Lu. 4:17-19 - Isa. 61:1-3
- Joh. 1:23 - Isa. 40:3-5
- Joh. 12:38 - Isa. 53:1
- Joh. 12:38-41 - Isa. 6:9-10; Isa. 29:10; 44:18. John quotes from both sections of Isaiah (Isa. 53:1 and Isa. 6:9) and says that both parts were written by the same prophet named Isaiah.
- Joh. 12:41 - Isa. 6:1
- Acts 8:28-33 - Isa. 53:7-8
- Acts 28:25-27 - Isa. 6:9-10
- Ro. 9:27-28 - Isa. 10:20-23
- Ro. 9:29 - Isa. 1:9
- Ro. 10:11 - Isa. 28:16
- Ro. 10:16 - Isa. 53:1
- Ro. 10:20-21 - Isa. 65:1-2
- Ro. 15:12 - Isa. 11:1, 10
- 1 Pe. 2:6 - Isa. 28:16

For a study of the attacks upon Isaiah and a refutation of those attacks and a verse-by-verse study of Isaiah, see the *Way of Life Commentary Series, Isaiah*, www.wayoflife.org.

The Wonder and Beauty of Isaiah

1. The book of Isaiah is set at the head of the prophets because it belongs at the head.

Isaiah is greater in scope and depth and beauty than any other prophet. It comprehends and anticipates all the other prophetic books. Isaiah is a whole Bible in itself. It is an infinite book. The believer could study Isaiah for hours every day of his life and not begin to come to the end of its teaching.

Isaiah is a universe of prophetic truth, with many passages and single verses being a world of revelation in themselves. It is a whole paradise of divine revelation, filled with delight for the believing soul. It is a fabulously rich mine from which the diligent student can draw spiritual wealth without end.

“The book that bears [Isaiah’s] name, in the variety, beauty, and force of its style, and in the sublimity of its contents, takes the foremost place in the prophetic literature” (James Robertson).

“What Beethoven is in the realm of music, what Shakespeare is in the realm of literature, what Spurgeon was among the Victorian preachers, that is Isaiah among the prophets. ... All who have any sense of literary appreciation must be impressed by the combined excellencies of Isaiah’s style--its grandeur and dignity, its energy and liveliness, its profusion of imagery, its vividness of description, its forceful play on words, its dramatic and rhetorical touches, and last, but not least, its wonderful variety” (J. Sidlow Baxter).

“Isaiah is the great messianic prophet and prince of OT prophets. For splendor of diction, brilliance of imagery, versatility and beauty of style, profundity and breadth of prophetic vision, he is without peer” (Merrill Unger).

“As Isaiah stands out from all the other prophets by the sublimity of his conception, the elevation of his sentiments, and the grandeur of his style, so is he also by fulness and variety of subject matter” (William Kelly).

Even when viewed strictly as literature, Isaiah should rank at the head of ancient writings.

“In all ages, Isaiah has been regarded as the most sublime of all writers. He is simple, bold, rapid, elevated; he abounds in metaphor, and in rapid transitions; his writings are full of the most sublime figures of rhetoric and the most beautiful ornaments of poetry. ... although his writings are not so ancient as those of Moses, or as those of Homer and Hesiod, yet they are more ancient than most of the admired Classic productions of Greece, and are far more ancient than any of the Latin Classics. As an ‘ancient writer’ Isaiah demands respect. **And laying out of view altogether the idea of his inspiration, and his ‘religious’ character, he has a claim as a poet, an orator, a writer of eminent beauty and unrivaled sublimity to the attention of those who are seeking eminence in literature. No reason can be given why in a course of mental training, Isaiah, and the language in which he wrote, should be neglected,** while Hesiod and Homer, with the language in which they wrote, should be the objects of admiration and of diligent culture. In no book, perhaps, can the mere man of taste be more gratified than in the study of Isaiah; **by no writings would the mind be more elevated in view of the beautiful and the sublime, or the heart be more refined by the contemplation of the pure. Few--very few of the Greek and Latin Classical writers--can**

Highlights in Jeremiah

The Prophet (Jer. 1:1)

The name *Jeremiah* is *yirm-eyahu* (Jehovah), which means “exalted of Jehovah” or “raised up of Jehovah” or “appointed by Jehovah.”

Jeremiah was of the priests in Anathoth. This was a walled town about three miles northeast of Jerusalem which was allotted to the Levites by Joshua (Jos. 21:17-19). It is situated on a hill from which the Dead Sea is visible to the east and the mountains of Moab beyond. Isaiah prophesied its destruction in Isaiah 10:24-34, which describes King Sennacherib’s brutal march through the land (“cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth,” Isa. 10:30). But verses 32-34 describe Sennacherib’s downfall. He only gets to shake his hand against Jerusalem from Nob (north of the Mt. of Olives) before he is humbled. This refers to the destruction of his army by the angel of the Lord. The site of ancient Anathoth lies in desolation today. When I visited there in 2017, the only people in sight were sheep and goat herders. There are remnants of ancient walls, foundations, and wells. God had pledged that Anathoth would be judged because of the plot to kill Jeremiah (Jer. 11:21-23).

Jeremiah prophesied during the reigns of the final five kings of Judah: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah.

The Theme of Jeremiah

Jeremiah prophesied dark times.

Jeremiah prophesied to Israel in the final years of the kingdom. The northern kingdom had been destroyed more than a century earlier (721 BC). Only Judah remained of the once great kingdom. Israel’s military might of former days was gone. The mighty men were mighty no more.

It was time of terrible apostasy. Jeremiah called the nation to repentance, but there would be no repentance. After Josiah, everything was dark. Jeremiah’s beloved nation was on its final leg. It was being destroyed before his very eyes. The nation’s leaders were wicked (Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah). The preachers were wicked. “For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD” (Jer. 23:11). The people were wicked. “For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth” (Jer. 23:10).

Jeremiah was eyewitness to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. He wrote the terrible Lament over the ruins.

Jeremiah is called “the weeping prophet,” because his weeping is recorded in his prophecy and in the book of Lamentations. The weeping was actually God’s weeping. God judged Israel severely, but He did not enjoy it. God expressed His love through the prophets, even as He pronounced judgment. “The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jer. 31:3). Nearly 600 years later, the Son of God wept over Jerusalem again. “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things

which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation” (Lu. 19:41-44).

In the midst of darkness, Jeremiah had hope and encouragement based on God’s promises. He had the promise of God’s presence and protection (Jer. 1:8, 19; 15:20-21). He could see beyond the dark times to the bright future (Jer. 30-33).

The Application

The book of Jeremiah has countless applications, but a major one is the preaching of God’s Word in the midst of end-time apostasy. Following are some of the ways that the 21st century Bible preacher can relate to Jeremiah and his times:

The preacher must stand alone for God in the midst of a rebellious generation.

He will have many troubles (e.g., loneliness, lies and slanders, threats, hatred, willful misunderstandings, temptations designed to cause him to stumble).

He must preserve the Scripture in the face of fierce attacks (e.g., Jehoiakim burning the prophecy, Jer. 36:23-32).

He must deal with stubborn hearts and stiff necks.

He will have much discouragement and heartache.

In many cases, he will have a small following and little fruit.

He will have to deal with the fact that he is “in competition” with a multitude of false teachers who tell the people what they want to hear. “The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love *to have it so*: and what will ye do in the end thereof?” (Jer. 5:31). See also Jer. 10:21; 23:11, 14, 17, 21. Compare 2 Ti. 4:3-4.

He will have to preach righteousness in an unrighteous age (Jer. 23:22).

He has no hope for better conditions in this present time. The Bible says the apostasy will only increase (2 Ti. 3:13).

He will be tempted to quit (Jer. 20:9).

He has a high calling to be God’s preacher in an evil generation.

He has the promises of the presence and help of God (Jer. 1:8, 19; 20:19-20).

He can draw nigh unto God and commune with God (Jer. 11:18-23; 12:1-6; 14:7-16).

He should not seek great things for himself in this present world (Jer. 45:5).

He must keep himself encouraged by God’s promises (Jer. 30-33). The prophecies of Christ’s kingdom apply to the New Testament believer, who is a king and priest and who will rule with Christ (Re 1:5-6).

Archaeological Findings Related to Jeremiah

See PowerPoint Pictorial Bible # 20, www.wayoflife.org.

Some spectacular artifacts from the time of Jeremiah have been unearthed which provide archaeological background to the biblical record.

Bullae (clay document seals, *bulla* is singular) have been found in the area of the royal palace bearing the names of people mentioned in the Bible who lived or worked in the palace just before it was burned by Nebuchadnezzar.

One of the seals is inscribed with “**Yahuchal ben Shalemiah ben Shovi.**” This means Yehuchal son of Shelemiah son of Shovi, with Shovi being the grandfather. Yahuchal is spelled *Jehucal* and *Jucal* in the King James Bible. A Jewish prince in Zedekiah’s court, he was sent by the king to ask Jeremiah to pray for them (Jer. 37:3). Later Jehucal was one of four princes who called for Jeremiah’s death (Jer. 38:1-4).

Another seal bears the name of **Gemaryahu ben Shafan** (Gemariah the son of Shaphan), who is mentioned four times in Scripture (Jer. 36:10, 11, 12, 25). It was in Gemariah’s chamber in the temple that Baruch read the words of Jeremiah’s prophecy (Jer. 36:10). Gemariah was one of three men who tried to dissuade the king from burning the scroll, “but he would not hear them” (Jer. 36:25).

Another bulla bears the name of **Azaryahu ben Hilkiyahu** (Azariah the son of Hilkiyah), who is mentioned in 1 Chronicles 9:11 as a member of the family of Zadok, high priest just before the Temple was destroyed.

Another seal contains the name of “**Elishama servant of the king,**” mentioned in Jeremiah 36:12.

Another seal is inscribed with “**Gedaliah son of Pashur,**” who is mentioned in Jer. 38:1.

A seal found in 1932 at Mizpah bears the inscription “**Yaazenyahu (Jaazaniah),** servant of the king.” In the Bible Jaazaniah is mentioned as a captain who survived the Babylonian invasion (2 Ki. 25:23).

In 1975, a seal was purchased by a prominent antiquities collector containing the inscription “[belonging] to **Berachyahu son of Neriyahu the scribe.**” This is a reference to Jeremiah’s scribe Baruch (Jer. 32:12; 36:4; 43:6; 45:1). The suffix “yahu” was a common epithet attached to names in Judah and means “blessed of Jehovah.” The authenticity of the seal has been questioned but not disproven, and it is on display at the Israel Museum.

In the 1930s an archaeological team led by James Starkey discovered 21 letters written on pottery shards (ostraca) in the excavations of the ancient city of Lachish, which was one of the last cities to fall to the Babylonians in Jeremiah’s day (Jer. 34:7). “The letters were found in 1935 in the ruins of a guardroom by the main gate of Lachish.” Most of the letters are written by Hoshaiyah, a military officer stationed at an observation point not far from Lachish, and are addressed to his commanding officer, Yaosh. They are written in “perfect classical Hebrew.” They mention **Gemariah** (Jer. 36:10), **Jaazaniah** (Jer. 35:3), **Neriah Baruch** (Jer. 36:4), and **Mattaniah** (King Zedekiah, 2 Ki. 24:17).

Letter No. 3 mentions “a prophet” who was demoralizing the people and was chased to Egypt. “It refers to a posse sent by the minister of the army, reporting to the King of Judea, who passed through Lachish on their way to Egypt and asked for extra men to take with them on a mission there. This mission seemed to be related to a prophet who received a warning and, presumably, fled to Egypt from the court of the King. The story seems quite complex and detailed with names of people involved. The extraordinary fact is that the Bible also talks about the same story in the book of Jeremiah, chapter 26:20-23, who prophesied before the destruction of Jerusalem

Highlights in Ezekiel

Ezekiel the Man

We don't know anything for sure about Ezekiel other than that which is mentioned in his prophecy. "There is no record of the time of the close of his prophetic activity or of his life, and the few traditions that remain about him are of little value" (F. Gardiner, *Biblical Illustrator*).

Ezekiel's name (*chazaq-el*) means "God will strengthen," and that is a fitting name for a prophet who was called to minister to impudent and stiffhearted people (Eze. 2:3-5).

Ezekiel was taken captive with Jehoiachin and began prophesying in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity (Eze. 1:2). Compare 2 Ki. 24:12-16. The captivity was in 597 BC, so five years later was 592 BC, six years before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC. (See also Eze. 33:21, where the prophet says, "in the twelfth year of OUR captivity.")

Ezekiel began his prophetic ministry at age 30 (Eze. 1:1).

Ezekiel was a priest (Eze. 1:3). It was to the priest prophet that God gave the vision of the Millennial Temple (Eze. 40-48).

Ezekiel lived on the River Chebar, which was a great canal built by Nebuchadnezzar that connected to the Euphrates near Babylon. Ezekiel lived here in his own house (Eze. 8:1). "This canal branched off from the Euphrates just above Babylon and flowed east of the city. It continued through the site of ancient Nippur and then reentered the Euphrates near Uruk (biblical Erech)" (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*). For a pictorial study of Chebar, see *Mastering the English Bible - Old Testament History*, the segment on "Ezekiel's Life in Babylon."

He was married and his wife's death was a sign to Israel of impending judgment (Eze. 24:15-24). The servant of the Lord must be willing to submit to God's will in every situation.

Timeline of Events of Ezekiel's Life

597 - Second deportation to Babylon; Jehoiachin taken captive (2 Ki. 24:8-16); this was when Daniel was carried away (Da. 1:1-6); Zedekiah reigns (2 Ki. 24:17-18)

593 - The glory of God departs from Israel's temple (Eze. 10:18; 11:23)

586 - Israel's temple and Jerusalem are destroyed; Zedekiah taken captive (2 Ki. 25:1-10; 2 Ch. 36:11-21; Jer. 39:1-9)

573 - Tyre falls to Nebuchadnezzar after a 13 year siege that began in 586

Outline of Ezekiel

I. Ezekiel 1 Ezekiel's Vision of God's Glory

II. Ezekiel 2-3 Ezekiel's call

Ezekiel is commanded to stand upon his feet (Eze. 2:1-2).

Ezekiel is commissioned to speak to Israel (Eze. 2:3-8).

Ezekiel is commanded to eat the scroll (Eze. 2:8 - 3:4).

Ezekiel is given a hard forehead (Eze. 3:4-11).

- Ezekiel is taken to Telabib by Chebar (Eze. 3:12-15).
- Ezekiel is appointed a watchman (Eze. 3:16-23).
- Ezekiel is instructed to speak only when directed by God (Eze. 3:24-27).

III. Ezekiel 4-24 God's Indictment of Israel

- Ezekiel is a sign of the siege of Jerusalem (Eze. 4)
- Ezekiel's hair is a sign of the destruction of Jerusalem (Eze. 5)
- God pronounces judgment against Israel's idolatry (Eze. 6)
- God pronounces the day of wrath (Eze. 7)
- The departure of the glory of God from Jerusalem (Eze. 8-11)
- Ezekiel is a sign of the destruction of Jerusalem (Eze. 12)
- God's Word against the false prophets (Eze. 13:1-16)
- God's Word against the false prophetesses (Eze. 13:17-23)
- The idolatrous elders condemned (Eze. 14:1-11)
- Jerusalem will not be spared (Eze. 14:12-23)
- Jerusalem likened to a vine (Eze. 15)
- Israel is likened to a whorish wife (Eze. 16)
- Parable of the eagles and the vine (Eze. 17)
- The soul that sinneth, it shall die (Eze. 18)
- Lamentation for the princes of Israel (Eze. 19)
- God indicts Israel for perpetual idolatry (Eze. 20:1-32)
- God will bring Israel under the rod (Eze. 20:33-49)
- The Messianic kingdom (Eze. 20:40-44)
- Prophecy against the forest of the south (Eze. 20:45-49)
- The sword of the Lord (Eze. 21:1-17)
- The king of Babylon at the head of two ways (Eze. 21:18-27)
- God's judgment on the Ammonites (Eze. 21:28-32)
- Jerusalem the bloody city (Eze. 22)
- Israel and Judah as whoring sisters (Eze. 23)
- Jerusalem likened to a seething pot (Eze. 24:1-14)
- Ezekiel's wife's death a sign (Eze. 24:15-27)

IV. Ezekiel 25-32 God's Witness against the Nations

- Against Ammon (Eze. 25:1-7)
- Against Moab and Seir (Eze. 25:8-11)
- Against Edom (Eze. 25:12-14)
- Against Philistia (Eze. 25:15-17)
- Against Tyre (Eze. 26-28)
- Against Egypt (Eze. 29-32)

V. Ezekiel 33:1 - 34:10 Final Warning to Israel

- The watchman prophecy repeated (Eze. 33:1-9)
- God's final plea to Israel (Eze. 33:10-20)
- The announcement of Jerusalem's destruction (Eze. 33:21-33)
- Prophecy against the shepherds of Israel (Eze. 34:1-10)

VI. Ezekiel 34-48 The Restoration of Israel

- Jehovah the Good Shepherd (Eze. 34:11-24)
- Judgment upon Seir (Eze. 35)
- Prophecy to the mountains of Israel (Eze. 36:1-15)
- Israel scattered among the nations (Eze. 36:16-21)
- Israel's Conversion (Eze. 36:22-36)
- The Valley of Dry Bones (Eze. 37:1-14)
- The Two Sticks (Eze. 37:15-28)
- Gog and Magog (Eze. 38-39)
- The Millennial Temple (Eze. 40-48)

The Major Themes of Ezekiel's Prophecies

The following are some of the major themes of Ezekiel:

To reveal God to Israel and the nations

- We see this theme in the repetition of "ye shall know that I am the LORD" 63 times (Eze. 6:7, 10, 13, 14, etc.).
- By the fulfillment of these prophecies, Israel and the nations will know that Jehovah is the true and living God and there is no other God. Fulfilled prophecy is an irrefutable evidence that the God revealed in Scripture is the true God.
- Consider the scattering and preservation of Israel. See Eze. 12:15-16; 20:42. The fact that Israel has been scattered among the nations for 2,000 years and yet has continued to exist as a nation and is in the process of returning to her homeland is a miracle. These events have happened exactly as the prophets stated in ancient times.
- In the theme of Ezekiel that Israel "shall know that I am the LORD," we see the folly of rabbinical Judaism which forbids the speaking of God's name *Jehovah* or *Yahweh*, which is composed of four Hebrew letters. In the three centuries before Christ, Jewish rabbinical tradition determined that the name of God is too holy to be spoken. It was alleged that God's name was pronounced in old times only by the high priest on the Day of Atonement, which is contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture. God's glorious name has been replaced in Jewish tradition by the bland *HaShem*, meaning "the name."

To reveal God's sovereignty

- The theme of Ezekiel is God's sovereignty over human affairs. He has an eternal purpose, and He is working all things toward that purpose.
- We see this theme in the vision of God's throne on the chariot of the cherubims (Eze. 1). This is the throne of the universe. It is a revelation of God in His glory and power and sovereignty over all nations and events.
- We see this theme in the repetition of "I will" 191 times. God is in control of all events described in Ezekiel's prophecies. "I will draw out a sword" (Eze. 5:2), "I will execute judgments" (Eze. 5:10), "I will scatter" (Eze. 5:12), "I will make thee waste" (Eze. 5:14), "I will destroy" (Eze. 6:3), "I will cast down" (Eze. 6:4), "I will judge thee" (Eze. 7:8), "I will recompense thee" (Eze. 7:9), "I will gather you" (Eze. 11:17), "I will give them one heart" (Eze. 11:19), "I will deliver my people" (Eze. 13:23), "I will make the land desolate" (Eze. 15:8), "I will cause" (Eze. 16:41), "I will establish" (Eze. 16:60), "I will do it" (Eze. 24:14), "I will deliver my flock" (Eze. 34:10), "I will save my flock" (Eze. 34:22), "I will set up one shepherd over them" (Eze. 34:23), "I will make with them a covenant of peace" (Eze. 24:35), "I will send a fire on Magog" (Eze. 39:7).

Highlights in Daniel

The Context

Daniel (*dawnee-el*, God my judge, God has judged) was of royal seed and was carried away captive to Babylon as a youth in the reign of Jehoiakim (Da. 1:1-6). Compare 2 Ch. 36:5-7.

Daniel became a high official in the Babylonian government (Da. 2:48) and continued to hold high office until the beginning of the Persian kingdom (Da. 6:1-3).

Daniel lived at the same time as Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Jeremiah was prophesying in Israel when Daniel was taken captive. Ezekiel was carried away captive eight years after Daniel and lived in Babylon and prophesied from there.

A Timeline of the Historical Background

- 605 Nebuchadnezzar is made king of Babylon upon Nebopolassar's death
- 602 First deportation from Jerusalem to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar; Jehoiakim put in shackles (2 Ch. 36:5-7); this was when Daniel was carried away (Da. 1:1-6)
- 597 Second deportation to Babylon; Jehoiachin taken captive (2 Ki. 24:8-16); Zedekiah begins to reign over Judah (2 Ki. 24:17-18).
- 593 The glory of God departs from Israel's temple (Eze. 10:18; 11:23)
- 586 Israel's temple and Jerusalem are destroyed by Babylon and Zedekiah is taken captive (2 Ki. 25:1-10; 2 Ch. 36:11-21; Jer. 39:1-9)**
- 573 Tyre falls to Nebuchadnezzar after a 13 year siege beginning in 586
- 563 Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha) c. 563-483 BC
- 562 Nebuchadnezzar dies and his son Evil-merodach reigns (562-559 BC)
- 555 Nabonidus of Babylon reigns with his son Balshazzar (556-539 BC)
- 551 Confucius in China 551-478 BC
- 550 Lao-tse founds Taoism in China
- 539 Cyrus (and Darius) conquers Babylon (Daniel 5); Daniel exalted as the president over the 120 princes (Da. 6:1-2)
- 538 Cyrus' edict to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 1; Isa. 44:28; 45:1)
- 536 Zerubbabel conducts remnant to Jerusalem (Ezra 2)
- 535 Foundation of new temple laid but work stopped (Ezra 3)
- 535 Daniel dies about this time; the last date given in Daniel is the third year of Cyrus

Daniel's Importance

Daniel's prophecies give an overview of God's program for Israel from Daniel's day until the second coming of Christ.

Daniel is one of the fundamental keys to understanding New Testament prophecies (such as Matthew 24, 2 Thessalonians 2, and Revelation).

Daniel's prophecies are the key to understanding human history over the past 2,500 years and particularly the end times.

- Daniel 2 teaches us that the Roman Empire holds a central role in the events of the end times. The empire is depicted by the legs of iron, but it continues until the time of the Antichrist in the form of the feet and toes of part iron/part clay.
- The Roman Empire united Europe and created the European culture that exists today.
- The Antichrist will rise out of western Europe. He is the “prince” of the people who destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70 (Da. 9:26).

The Times of the Gentiles

To Daniel God revealed the major events of “the times of the Gentiles” (Lu. 21:24), during which Israel is under the control of Gentile nations. The times of the Gentiles dates from the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon until the return of Christ to establish His kingdom. This revelation is contained in six prophecies:

- The prophecy of the great image shown to Nebuchadnezzar (Da. 2)
- The prophecy of the four beasts (Da. 7)
- The prophecy of the ram and goat (Da. 8) (Greece and Persia)
- The prophecy of the 70 Weeks (Da. 9) (Rome)
- The prophecy of Antiochus Epiphanes of Greek Syria (Da. 11:1-35)
- The prophecy of the Antichrist (Da. 11:36 - 12:13)

The Latter Days

Daniel’s prophecies are for the latter days and the time of the end. This is emphasized by repetition (Da. 2:28; 8:17, 19; 10:14; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9).

This means that the prophecies are chiefly not for Daniel’s time or any other former time, as per the allegorical method of interpretation. The prophecies are for our day.

This also means that the prophecies were not fully understood until the time of the end (Da. 12:9). In the 19th and 20th centuries there was a movement to interpret prophecy literally. It was a revival of the type of interpretation that existed in the early centuries. The first churches were looking for a literal return of Christ to establish a literal kingdom (1 Th. 1:9-10). The literal prophecy movement of the 20th century was promoted by the Scofield Reference Bible, the Bible Institute movement, and a slew of commentaries and other books on prophecy. There was an intense study of Bible prophecy, and current events became clear in light of prophecy. These included the ecumenical movement (toward building a one-world “church” as described in Revelation 17), the creation of the United Nations (toward a one-world government as described in Revelation 13), and the return of Israel to her land and the establishment of her modern state in 1948 (as described in Ezekiel 37).

“Thy People”

The prophecies of Daniel pertain to Israel. The phrase “thy people,” referring to Daniel’s people, appears eight times (Da. 9:15, 16, 19, 24; 10:14; 11:14; 12:1).

The “holy people” (Da. 8:24; 12:7) and “saints” (Da. 7:21, 22, 25, 27) are the people of Israel, not the church.

To interpret Old Testament prophecy properly, the Bible student must understand that the church is a mystery that was not revealed in the Old Testament (Eph. 3:4-6). During this present

Minor Prophets Introduction

Miscellaneous

1. There are 12 Minor Prophets:

Hosea

Joel

Amos

Obadiah

Jonah

Micah

Nahum

Habakkuk

Zephaniah

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi

2. Why are they called Minor Prophets?

They are not called the “minor prophets” because they are of lesser importance than the “major prophets” of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel. Each of the minor prophetic books is a powerful and important divine revelation.

They are called “minor” because they are generally shorter in length. (The exceptions are Hosea and Zechariah which have more chapters than Daniel.)

They are called “minor” because the prophecies encompass a smaller view than the major prophets. The major prophets give the broad overview of prophetic events and themes, whereas each minor prophet focuses on one or more of these events and themes to enlarge and amplify it.

3. In the old Hebrew Bible, the Minor Prophets were grouped together as a single book under the title of “The Twelve” and were usually written on one scroll. The first extant mention of “The Twelve” is found in the writings of Jesus ben Sirach, dating to about 190 BC. The oldest extant portions are among the Dead Sea Scrolls and date to about 150-200 BC.

4. In the Greek Bible (the Septuagint), the Minor Prophets appear in the following order: Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The Chronological Order of the Minor Prophets

The Minor Prophets were written during the time dating from Israel’s divided kingdom to the restoration of Israel after the Babylonian Captivity.

The exact date of the prophets cannot be known with certainty in every case, but the following is according to James Ussher’s chronology:

1. Minor Prophets that ministered before the exile to Babylon

Obadiah (887 BC) (ministered to the northern tribes)
Jonah (862 BC) (preached to Nineveh)
Joel (date unknown)
Amos (787 BC) (ministered to the northern tribes)
Hosea (785-725 BC) (ministered to the northern tribes)
Micah (750-710 BC) (ministered to Judah)
Nahum (713 BC) (prophesied about Nineveh)
Zephaniah (630 BC) (ministered to Judah)
Habakkuk (626 BC) (ministered to Judah)

2. Minor Prophets that ministered after the exile to Babylon

Haggai (520 BC)
Zechariah (520-518 BC)
Malachi (397 BC)

The Historical Background of the Minor Prophets

As we have seen, most of the Minor Prophets ministered during the period of the divided kingdom. The first king of Israel was Saul, followed by David and Solomon. The kingdom was divided in the days of Solomon's son, Rehoboam.

Two tribes followed Rehoboam: Judah and Benjamin. This kingdom is called *Judah* or the *southern kingdom*.

The other 10 tribes followed Jeroboam and broke away from the Davidic throne. The northern ten tribes are usually called *Israel* after this.

The northern kingdom established an idolatrous system of worship centered in Bethel and Dan (1 Ki. 12:25-33). This is why the northern kingdom is often called *Ephraim* in prophecy, because Ephraim was at the heart of the rebellious northern tribes (Isa. 11:13; Hos. 4:17; 5:3). Samaria, which was in Ephraim, became the capital of the northern kingdom and was another center of idolatry (1 Ki. 16:24, 29, 32; Ho. 8:5).

The Bible student who is preparing to study the prophets should begin by reading 1 Kings - 2 Chronicles to refresh his memory about the historical background. The best way to get this essential historical information into one's mind and heart is to outline it personally by listing the kings and the highlights of each reign.

For a summary of Israel's kings, we recommend *Old Testament History and Geography*, which is available from Way of Life Literature. This study provides a quick reference for the background of the prophets. It has many relevant facts such as which prophets were ministering during the various periods of Israel's history. It focuses on the kings of Judah, but the major events of northern Israel are also included. Major facts from both Kings and Chronicles are included.

For background research, we also recommend *Bible Times & Ancient Kingdoms: Treasures from Archaeology* from Way of Life Literature. This is a course consisting of a 572-page book and a series of 50 PowerPoint presentations packed with about 6,000 high quality color photos, drawings, historic recreations, and video clips.

Major Themes of the Minor Prophets

Some of the themes of the Minor Prophets are as follows:

1. The revelation of God

The chief purpose of the Bible is to reveal God's heart and character. If we read the Bible without seeing God, we are missing the main thing.

In the Minor Prophets, we see God's holiness and righteousness and terrible justice. The day of the Lord is called "a destruction from the Almighty" (Joe. 1:15), "great and very terrible" (Joe. 2:11), "the LORD's sacrifice" (Zep. 1:8), "the LORD's anger" (Zep. 2:3).

In the Minor Prophets, we see God's greatness as the Lord over all, the King of kings, the beginning and the end. For example, see Nahum 1:3-7.

In the Minor Prophets, we see God's amazing love and kindness and longsuffering. G. Campbell Morgan observed, "When I decided to take up these minor prophets, I expected to study a very magnificent section of prophecy in which I should hear stern, hard, magnificent Hebrew prophets thundering against sin. I found this even more than I had expected, but the supreme thing in every one of their prophecies is that the God with whom these men were intimate was known by them to be a God of tender love, of infinite compassion, angry because He loves, dealing in wrath upon the basis of His love, and proceeding through judgment to the ultimate purpose of His heart. It is the heartbeat of God that throbs through these passages."

In the Minor Prophets, we see God's zeal and passion.

- God is passionate in His love. We have Hosea's love for the harlot Gomer as a picture of God's great love for Israel (Ho. 1:2-3; 3:1-3). We have the very opening words of Malachi, "I have loved you, saith the LORD" (Mal. 1:2).
- God is passionate in His judgment. God's fierce judgment is described in terms of a burning oven. This is a metaphor for all of the terrible judgments of the Tribulation and beyond to the eternal lake of fire, which is the destiny of every unsaved person.
- God is passionate in His jealousy. He has "very great jealousy" for Jerusalem (Zec. 1:14-17).
- God is passionate in His preaching. God beseeches, pleads, threatens. It's all done with great passion. For example, through the prophet Amos God says, "O children of Israel." God's preachers should emulate this. They are to "cry" out (Zec. 1:14, 17). There should be passion, enthusiasm, energy, zeal in preaching. It should not consist merely of talking. The subjects are too great, too consequential for that. The preacher must feel the power of the message and express it with pathos.

2. The call of Israel to repentance

The Minor Prophets contain great studies on repentance. See Ho. 10:12; 12:6; 14:1-3; Joe. 1:13-14; 2:12-17; Am. 4:6-13; 5:4-15; Jon. 3:5-9; Zep. 2:1-2; Hag. 1:3-11; Zec. 1:2-6; 2:1-6; 12:9-14; Mal. 2:1-3; 3:7.

3. The day of the Lord

The day of the Lord's judgment is described in great detail. See Joel 1:15 - 2:11, 28-32; Am. 5:16-20; Ob. 1:15-16; Hab. 3:3-15; Zep. 1:2-18; 2:4-15; 3:1-8; Hag. 2:6, 20-22; Zec. 5:1-4; 14:1-15; Mal. 4.

The Battle of Armageddon is described in Joe. 3:2-16; Zep. 3:8; Zec. 12:1-9; 14:1-7, 12-15.