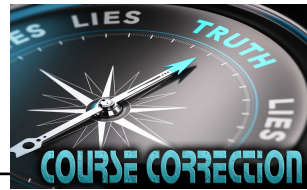


Major & Minor Prophets

Course Correction



- When has God brought someone into your life who helped you make a course correction when you were going in the wrong direction?

The history of Israel in the Old Testament shows that their lives often got off course spiritually and in many other ways. God sent the prophets to correct them and encourage them to make a course correction. Sometimes, Israel listened to the prophets and made corrections that resulted in God's favor and a blessed life. Sadly, too many times, they rejected the prophets and their message from God and suffered the consequences of their foolish decisions.

We do not have prophets today in the same sense as the Old Testament prophets, but we, as Christ-followers, are ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor.5:20), *"So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, 'Come back to God!'"*. We are to help people see how to apply God's Word to their lives as they struggle spiritually and with life's problems. God can use us to help people make course corrections when they are straying from the Biblical patterns of life.

The Major and Minor Prophets are the least studied books of the Bible by the average Christian. Yet, the New Testament writers often quoted them. They were a significant part of the scriptures for the Old Testament people and early Christianity before the writings of the New Testament. Anyone who wants a complete understanding and knowledge of the Bible must include a study of the Major and Minor Prophets. Also, we can learn lessons on how to keep our lives on course spiritually.

Central Lesson:

God often sends people to speak into our lives when we need a course correction.

Overview of the Major & Minor Prophets

- The Old Testament has 39 books, **17** of which are called the Prophets—5 Major Prophets and 12 Minor Prophets. The terms Major and Minor are assigned by man rather than by God and refer to the size of the books (longer), not the importance or ranking of the prophet.
- The **5** Major Prophets are—*Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel*. The **12** Minor Prophets are—*Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*.
- The Major and Minor Prophets were individuals who **SPOKE** for God as He gave them a message. Some were priests (Joel, Habakkuk), simple villagers (Micah), shepherds (Amos), etc. Their message usually was a call to repentance and correction for people who had drifted into sin, and their message was an encouragement to make life course corrections to align their lives to God's will and way of living.
- The message of the prophets can be characterized as "**FORTH**-telling" and "**FORE**-telling." *Forth-telling* means that the prophet spoke forth the Word

of God, usually a call to repentance and the prophet saying, "Thus says the Lord" or "The word of the Lord came to me" (Jer. 1:9; Ezek. 2:7). *Foretelling* means God gave them a glance into the future. The prophets did not always understand the messages God gave them but, in obedience, spoke it anyway (Dan. 7:28; 8:15-27; 10:7-15; Rev. 7:13-14; 17:16). Example is 1 Pet. 1:10-13, *"¹⁰ This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you. ¹¹ They wondered what time or situation the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ's suffering and his great glory afterward. ¹² They were told that their messages were not for themselves, but for you...."*

- The **topics** communicated by the prophets are: (1) *God's holiness*. (2) *The sin of God's chosen people*. (3) *Repentance*. (4) *God's judgment on rebellion*. (5) *God's judgment of the surrounding nations*. (6) *The return of God's people from captivity*. (7) *The coming of the Messiah*. (8) *The Messiah's 2nd coming*. (9) *The restoration of Israel as a nation*. (10) *Christ's universal reign over the earth*.
- The Major & Minor Prophets were voices for God to **the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel and Judah (see the chart)**.
- The 12 tribes of Israel were divided into **TWO** kingdoms under the rule of King Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. Rehoboam was wicked and harsh with the people (1 Kings 12).
 - ▶ Ten of the tribes formed **the Northern Kingdom** and settled in Samaria, keeping the name Israel. The remaining two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, formed **the Southern Kingdom** and remained in Jerusalem under the rule of Rehoboam.
 - ▶ Over the years, Israel and Judah rebelled against God. The Lord removed his protection, and **Assyria** captured **the Northern Kingdom** of Israel and took them into slavery in 722 BC. The two tribes of **the Southern Kingdom**, Judah, were years later captured and taken into slavery by **Babylon** (586 BC).
 - ▶ Judah would be in captivity for 70 years, as foretold by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11), and return to Jerusalem to rebuild their nation. The ten tribes of Israel were never able to return.
 - ▶ The books of Nehemiah and Ezra record the return of Judah after 70 years of captivity. Nehemiah and Ezra are the end of the OT history.
- Some Major and Minor Prophets spoke **BEFORE** the two kingdoms were captured. They are called the "**Pre-exilic**" Prophets: *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*. Two prophets spoke **DURING** Judah's 70-year captivity and are called the "**Exilic**" Prophets: *Ezekiel and Daniel*. The remaining three prophets spoke **AFTER** the 70 years of captivity and are called the "**Post-exilic**" Prophets: *Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*.
- God loved His people and sent the prophets to call wayward Israel and Judah back to Himself. The prophets called God's chosen to make a course correction and seek Him, turn from sin, and stop letting the corrupt nations around them influence their morals and beliefs. God is calling people today to make a course **CORRECTION** and to seek Him.

Central Lesson: God often sends people to speak into our lives when we need a course correction.

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.
- ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week. ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.