

Major Words from Minor Voices: An Introduction to the Minor Prophets

Prophecy, Prophets

Prophecy is the most common means God used to communicate with people throughout biblical history. The story of prophecy, from Genesis to Revelation, is the story of God speaking to people through human messengers, and thus it is the story of God's varying relationships with his people and with others. Speaking through the prophets, God guided kings and people by telling them how to act in specific situations, warned people when they disobeyed him, predicted events that he would bring about, interpreted events when they came about, and demonstrated that he alone was both ruler of history and a God who relates personally to his people.

The basic biblical principles regarding prophets and prophecy are found in the Pentateuch, especially in connection with Moses, but a regular office of prophet, and bands of secondary prophets, are not fully established until the period covered by the later historical books and the prophetic writings. In the Gospels, Jesus is seen as a great prophet, but much more than a prophet. The book of Acts and the epistles describe a gift of prophecy given to Christians which has lesser authority but much wider distribution than canonical prophecy, and prophecy is seen as the most valuable of the Holy Spirit's many gifts to the church (see Spiritual gifts). The Bible closes with a sobering yet magnificent picture of the future in the prophecy of Revelation.

W. A. Grudem, "Prophecy, Prophets," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 701.

Lesson Outline:

The Hebrew Bible and the Christian Canon

Prophets and Prophecy in the Old Testament

The Book of the Twelve: The Minor Prophets

Lesson Questions:

What are the differences between the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Canon (Old Testament)?

What are the functions of the prophet in the Old Testament?

Where is the Old Testament “definition” of the prophet (OT book and chapter)?

Who is the “voice” Isaiah’s prophecy and who’s ministry life does he reflect, according to Jesus?