

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Lesson 23 w/Answers

The Major and Minor Prophets

Having just looked at the Kings who served during the time of the divided kingdom of Israel, let's now turn our attention to the prophets who ministered during this time. You may want to refer again to the [Kings and Prophets study aid](#) from our last lesson. (Again, this is a large file, and may take a little while to download to your computer.)



Referred to as the Major and Minor Prophets in the Old Testament, they served as God's messengers during the decline, eventual collapse, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the return of the exiles from Babylon. The ministries of these prophets are divided among seventeen books of prophecy within the Old Testament: five books referred to as "Major", and twelve referred to as "Minor".

To introduce ourselves to a study of the books of the Prophets, answer the following:

1. The thirty-nine books in the Old Testament are acknowledged to be grouped as 5 books, 12 books, 5 books, 5 books and 12 books. The group headings are shown below. List the books that comprise each group.
 - a. The 5 books of the Law, or Torah, are:
 - i. 1: Genesis
 - ii. 2: Exodus
 - iii. 3: Leviticus
 - iv. 4: Numbers
 - v. 5: Deuteronomy
 - b. The 12 books of History are:
 - i. 1: Joshua
 - ii. 2: Judges
 - iii. 3: Ruth
 - iv. 4: 1 Samuel
 - v. 5: 2 Samuel
 - vi. 6: 1 Kings
 - vii. 7: 2 Kings
 - viii. 8: 1 Chronicles
 - ix. 9: 2 Chronicles
 - x. 10: Ezra
 - xi. 11: Nehemiah
 - xii. 12: Esther
 - c. The 5 books of Poetry, or Wisdom Writings, are:
 - i. 1: Job
 - ii. 2: Psalms
 - iii. 3: Proverbs
 - iv. 4: Ecclesiastes
 - v. 5: Song of Solomon

d. The 5 books of the Major Prophets are:

- i. 1: Isaiah
- ii. 2: Jeremiah
- iii. 3: Lamentations
- iv. 4: Ezekiel
- v. 5: Daniel

e. The 12 books of the Minor Prophets are:

- i. 1: Hosea
- ii. 2: Joel
- iii. 3: Amos
- iv. 4: Obadiah
- v. 5: Jonah
- vi. 6: Micah
- vii. 7: Nahum
- viii. 8: Habakkuk
- ix. 9: Zephaniah
- x. 10: Haggai
- xi. 11: Zechariah
- xii. 12: Malachi

2. How many Major Prophets were there?

a. ANSWER: This is a bit of a trick question. There were four; since one of the five books in the section called "Major Prophets" is not a prophet's name, but rather a second book attributed to Jeremiah entitled Lamentations.

3. Covering a period of over four hundred years in length, from the first writing by Obadiah in 840 BC to the last written by Malachi in 420 BC, what measure was used to determine if a prophet's writings were placed within the section called Major Prophets or the section called Minor Prophets?

a. ANSWER: The books were classified as either Major or Minor primarily based on their relative length.

4. How many chapters are contained within Isaiah, and why should this be easy to remember?

a. ANSWER: There are 66 chapters in Isaiah, just as there are 66 books in the Bible - 39 books in the Old Testament, and 27 books in the New Testament.

5. What does the name Isaiah translate into when taken from the original Hebrew?

a. ANSWER: Jehovah Saves, or Jehovah is Salvation, or Salvation of Jehovah.

6. In Isaiah's writing he refers to the Messiah in two different ways. Compare, for example, Isaiah chapter 53 with Isaiah chapter 11. What are the differences?

a. ANSWER: Isaiah refers to the Messiah in different ways, depending on which of His two comings is applicable. In chapter 53, the Messiah is referred to as the suffering Messiah (applicable to His First Coming); and in Chapter 11, the Messiah is referred to as the Reigning Messiah (applicable to His Second Coming).

7. Isaiah's book is the most quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament. Known for his brilliant writing and focus on the coming Messiah, he served during the turbulent times for both kingdoms, Judah and Israel. What righteous king of Judah was influenced by Isaiah?

a. ANSWER: Hezekiah.

8. Isaiah's public ministry took place during the last seventeen years of the Northern Kingdom. However, his message was predominantly focused on the Southern Kingdom (Judah) during the time covered in 2 Kings Chapters 14 through 21. What are the names of the Kings of Judah who reigned during his ministry? (See Isaiah 1:1.)
 - a. ANSWER: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah were the kings who served during Isaiah's ministry.
 9. What does tradition hold regarding how Isaiah died? See also Hebrew 11:37 and 2 Kings 21:16.
 - a. ANSWER: Tradition has it that the evil king Manasseh, who succeeded Hezekiah to the throne, had Isaiah sawed in half.
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In our next lesson, we will continue our look at Isaiah's ministry and writings and the great message of salvation proclaimed to all. This Good News of the coming Messiah is a message that is as relevant today as it was then: Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah, is coming again; and through Him salvation is available to all.

Thanks for studying with us. Have a great week everyone.

In Christ,

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