

## The Minor Prophets are also known as “The Twelve”

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|------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1. Hosea   | 5. Jonah    | 9. Zephaniah  |
| 2. Joel    | 6. Micah    | 10. Haggai    |
| 3. Amos    | 7. Nahum    | 11. Zechariah |
| 4. Obadiah | 8. Habakkuk | 12. Malachi   |

## The World of the Twelve

The lives of the prophets in the Book of the Twelve span a period of more than three centuries (c. 785–430 BC), and they ministered in some of Israel’s most tumultuous days.

The Lord sent prophets to Israel and Judah during the Assyrian crisis before the fall of Samaria in 722 BC and then sent more prophets to Judah in the Babylonian crisis before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

The specific mission of the Twelve was threefold:

1. To call the people to repentance so that they might avert divine judgment.
2. To warn them of the judgment of exile when there was no repentance.
3. To offer hope for the future as the people returned to the land following the exile.

	Prophets to Israel*	Prophets to Judah*
ASSYRIAN PERIOD	<b>Jonah (785–775)</b> <b>Amos (760–750)</b> <b>Hosea (750–715)</b>	Isaiah (740–681) <b>Micah (735–690)</b>
BABYLONIAN PERIOD		<b>Zephaniah (630–620)</b> <b>Nahum (630)</b> <b>Habakkuk (620)</b> Jeremiah (627–580) <b>Obadiah (600?)</b> Ezekiel (593–570)
PERSIAN PERIOD (POSTEXILIC)		<b>Haggai (520)</b> <b>Zechariah (520–518)</b> <b>Joel (500?)</b> <b>Malachi (450–430)</b>

**\*The Twelve are in bold**

## The Role of the Twelve

The role of foretelling the future was often secondary to the role of forthtelling; that is, preaching the heart of God to his people.

As forthtellers, the primary role of the prophets was to proclaim the word of God as “covenant reinforcement mediators,” preaching to the people a message of blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience.

Foretelling prophecy can be generally categorized by three broad periods of fulfillment:

- **Near-Term** - Usually involved announcements of judgment reflecting various aspects of impending exile, including the destruction of Samaria in 722 BC and Jerusalem in 586.
- **Middle-Term** - Frequently those prophecies fulfilled in the first coming of Christ.
- **Far-Term** - Prophecies yet to find fulfillment, even from a modern perspective.

The way they framed the message was both new and innovative; their role was to get the attention of the people and to remind them of covenant obligations.

As God’s prosecuting attorneys, the prophets brought an indictment against Israel (or the nations) that revolved around five primary areas of violation:

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) Idolatry         | (4) Hypocritical Ritualism |
| (2) Social injustice | (5) Spiritual apathy       |
| (3) Violence         |                            |

## The Book of the Twelve

The Jews referred to this collection as the “Book of the Twelve” because they recognized them as a single literary work from ancient times. By as early as 200 BC, it appears that the Book of the Twelve was written on a single scroll and recognized as a single book.

Unifying themes in the Book of the Twelve:

- Israel’s Failure to Repent in Response to the Prophetic Word
- The Day of the Lord
- The Broken and Restored Covenant
- The Promise of a New David

## Teacher's Notes

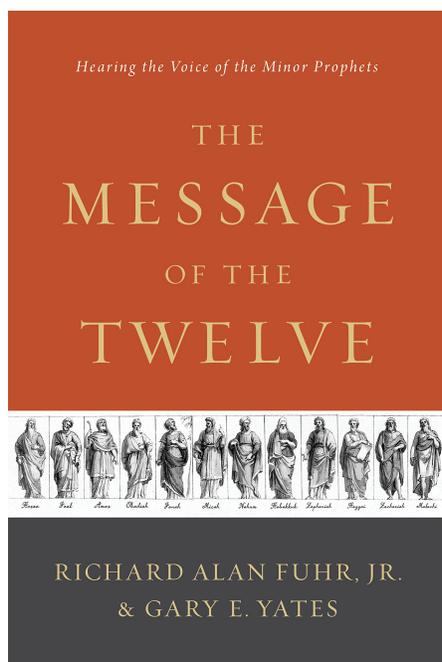
### Why study the Minor Prophets or "The Twelve"

The prophets remind us that God cannot be pushed to the margins of our lives or trivialized and manipulated into fulfilling our personal agendas. The prophets restore a vision of God's immensity and challenge us to worship and revere him above all else.

The prophets often spoke of the last days and enlarge our vision of the future kingdom of God, but they concentrated their preaching on confronting the sins of their culture and instructing the people about how to live in faithfulness and obedience to the Lord. In speaking to the crises and moral dilemmas of their day, the prophets addressed ethical issues that remain crucially important in the contemporary world, including the proper use of wealth, treatment of the poor, legal justice, war, violence, and the responsibilities of leadership.

If the Lord exercised his sovereignty over the nations as the Assyrians and Babylonians led his people into exile, then he is equally able to accomplish his purposes in the midst of current global unrest and the threat of international terrorism.<sup>1</sup>

### Recommended Resource



#### ***The Message of the Twelve: Hearing the Voice of the Minor Prophets***

Richard Alan Fuhr, Jr.  
Gary E. Yates

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<sup>1</sup> Fuhr, Al. The Message of the Twelve (p. 1). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.