

# The Books of the Major Prophets

(God's True Story)

## Introduction

[Teacher, review what we have learned so far about the Bible.] Last week we learned about the five books of Poetry. Today we will learn about the 5 books called the Major Prophets.

## Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for speaking to the prophets of old and encouraging them to write down all that You told them. Now we are not left wondering what to expect in the future. We will not be surprised by Your return. We look forward to the fulfillment of all Your promises. We ask You to open our eyes so that we might see within our spirits all the wonderful things that you tell us in Your word. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse:

*For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)*

## Lesson

So far, we have learned about the Books of Moses, the History books, and the Books of Poetry. The rest of the books in the Old Testament are called the Prophets because each book was written by a prophet.

Who knows what a *prophet* is? A *prophet* is someone who hears God's message and passes it on to His people. Prophets in Bible times were men who spoke and wrote for God. Before the Bible had been completely written down and put together, prophets would tell people what God's messages were. They would speak to God and God would tell them what to tell the people.

Some Bible prophets talked about the past – they reminded the people of what God had done for them and how much He loved them. When the people sinned against God, the prophets warned them about God's punishment for sin (Isaiah 1:18-20).

Some of the prophets wrote about the future—God gave them the ability to tell what was going to happen long before it did. Hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, the prophets, predicted His place of birth (Micah 5:2). They foretold the painful death He would suffer to save us (Isaiah 52; 53). There was no way they could have known these things unless God had revealed the future to them. The prophet's writings are inspired—just like all the other books in the Bible.

Many prophecies have already come true. But others are yet to be fulfilled. We know the things predicted will happen because God's Word is never wrong (Psalm 119:160). One prophecy we're still waiting to see fulfilled is the second coming of the Lord Jesus (Zechariah 14:4). One day, if we've accepted Him as our Savior from sin, Jesus will come again and take us to be with Him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

The books of the prophets are divided into two groups, the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets. The titles Major and Minor do not mean that the books in one group are more important than those in the other, but that the books in the Major Prophets are longer than those in the Minor Prophets.

## *Isaiah*

Isaiah worked for the government. He was an advisor to the King on important matters involving other countries. Although he had an important job, he told other people about the coming of the Messiah and encouraged them to turn to God. Many people were worshiping false gods and Isaiah challenged them to turn back to the true God (1:18), their Creator, who loved and cared for them (40:18-31). Isaiah encouraged them with God's promise to send a Savior who would one day reign forever (9:6, 7; 53; 66).

**Jeremiah**

Jeremiah grew up in a wealthy home but had a special love for poor people. God asked Jeremiah to preach a very difficult message: God's people were to surrender to their enemies. God was going to judge them for worshiping idols and for other sins. He was grieved with them for taking advantage of the poor and for following lying preachers who were only after money. When Jeremiah told his people what God had said, the leaders beat him and put him in prison. But Jeremiah remained true to God. God used Jeremiah's suffering to make him a gentle, compassionate man who people called the weeping prophet. Near the end of his life Jeremiah wrote another book, called Lamentations.

**Lamentations**

Lamentations is a beautiful but sad poem telling us the story of the burning of Jerusalem. The word *lament* means "to cry out in grief." Jeremiah laments as he sees the tears his people shed when their city is destroyed and they are taken captive. The Jews needed to take God's warnings about sin seriously, and so do we. If we ignore them, we will suffer the consequences, too. But even when we are facing judgment, our faithful, loving God offers us forgiveness (Lamentations 3:22-25).

**Ezekiel**

Ezekiel faced hard times, too. He was a prisoner of war. He grew up in Israel, where his father was a priest. But as a young man, Ezekiel was captured and taken to faraway Babylon. There he became God's prophet, the spiritual leader of the captive Jews. As God revealed His message (often through vision), Ezekiel preached it. The Jews were mourning because they had been taken away from their homeland. Ezekiel told them that they must accept their situation. It was God's punishment for the nation's sins—pride, materialism, idleness, and selfishness (16:48-51). Though Israel as a nation was being judged, Ezekiel challenged his fellow captives to turn back to God (33:14-20)

Then God would bless them as individuals (34:11-17, 26). Ezekiel also reminded them of God's promise to bless and honor the nation of Israel in the future (chapters 36-48).

**Daniel**

Daniel was a captive who was taken away to Babylon as a teenager, long before Ezekiel arrived there. He and some of his friends (all from important Jewish families) had been selected to receive special training that would prepare them to become loyal leaders for Babylon. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego studied hard and showed respect to the men in charge of them. But they refused to give up their godly training (Daniel 1:8). Because they were faithful to Him, God made these four excel above all the other students. Then God gave them important positions and used them to spread the message that He alone is God.

God also allowed Daniel and his friends to go through very difficult times. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were thrown into a fiery furnace because they refused to bow down and worship the king (Daniel 3:19-28). Daniel was lowered into a den of hungry lions (Daniel 6:16-23). But God was with them and protected them all. Their example can teach us to stand up for right when people want us to do wrong. Because Daniel remained faithful to God, God made him a leader under several kings. God also used Daniel to write about important future events. Many have already been fulfilled (Daniel 2:15-45; 7:1-7), but other exciting events that he foretold, God has not yet brought about (much of chapters. 7-12).

Can you remember the books of the Old Testament from Genesis through Daniel? If you need help, turn to your Table of Contents and read them

**Closing Prayer**

Father, again, we thank You for our Bibles. They are truly remarkable and special books. I pray that You would instill in our hearts a love for

Your word and a desire to read and understand all that You've made sure was written down for us. You've given us Your word so that we might have all that we need for life and godliness. And for that we are truly grateful. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Books of the Old Testament Song

(To the tune of "Did You Ever See a Lassie?")

*Let us sing the books of Moses, of Moses, of Moses,*

*Let us sing the books of Moses, for he wrote the law.*

*First, **Genesis**; second, **Exodus**; third, **Leviticus**; fourth, **Numbers**;*

*And the fifth is **Deuteronomy**, the last of them all.*

*Let us sing the books of history, of history, of history,*

*Let us sing the books of history, which tell of the Jews.*

*There's **Joshua**, and **Judges**, and the story of **Ruth**.*

*First and second **Samuel**; and two books of **Kings**;*

*There's two books of **Chronicles**, which give us the records;*

*Then **Ezra**; **Nehemiah**; and **Esther**, the Queen.*

*Let us sing the books of poetry, of poetry, of poetry,*

*Let us sing the books of poetry, the songs of the Jews.*

***Job** the patient, **Psalms** of David, and **Proverbs** of wise men;*

*And then, **Ecclesiastes**, and **Solomon's Song**.*

*Let us sing the Major Prophets, Major Prophets, Major Prophets,*

*Let us sing the Major Prophets, the greatest of all.*

***Isaiah**, **Jeremiah**, who wrote **Lamentations**;*

***Ezekiel** and **Daniel**, who were true to their God.*

### Game Center

#### *Name that Book*

1. This book records the beginning of all things. (Genesis)
2. This book records Joshua and the battle of Jericho. (Joshua)
3. You can find the story of Gideon and Samson in this book. (Judges)
4. You can read about the story of Ruth and Boaz in this book. (Ruth)
5. Where can you find the selection of Saul as the first king of Israel? (1 Samuel)
6. This book records how Prophet Samuel anointed David to succeed King Saul as Israel's king. (1 Samuel)
7. This book records how Ezra led the Israelites rebuild God's temple. (Ezra)
8. This book records how Nehemiah rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem. (Nehemiah)
9. You can find the story of Queen Esther and how she saved the Israelites from being killed in this book. (Esther)
10. This book records the story of Noah and the flood. (Genesis)
11. You can find the parting of the Red Sea by Moses in this book. (Exodus)

12. This book begins and ends with the numbering of the Israelites. (Numbers)
13. This book records the story of the 12 spies sent into the Promised Land. (Numbers)
14. Where do you read about the endings of all things? (Revelation)

### ***Bible Book Scramble***

Put the name of each of the Bible books on a separate index card. Scramble the cards and let a child take one. Have the child read the name of the card. Ask what book comes before and after the book. Let the child who answers be the next to take a card.

### ***Review Questions***

Or, use the following questions as a hand out, send it home as a "take home" paper, or use in a game of your choice.

Over and over again God spoke to His people through prophets. These men reminded Israel of the coming Messiah — God's promised Savior. God's people listened and waited in hope.

1. One of the greatest prophets was a man named \_\_\_\_\_. He told Israel many things about the Messiah.
2. Isaiah said that the Lord would send a sign when the Savior came. A virgin would have a \_\_\_\_\_ named *Immanuel*, which means "*God is with us.*" (Read Isaiah 7:14.)
3. Isaiah promised that the Savior's birth would be like a great light that suddenly brings joy and life to people trapped in darkness.
4. Isaiah wrote that the Savior would come as a child and someday be a great ruler.

5. For whom would this child be born? \_\_\_\_\_ (Read Isaiah 9:6). This meant the Jews, but the Savior also came for all of us.

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