



PRINCIPLES IN SERVING GOD

OLD TESTAMENT

MINOR PROPHETS

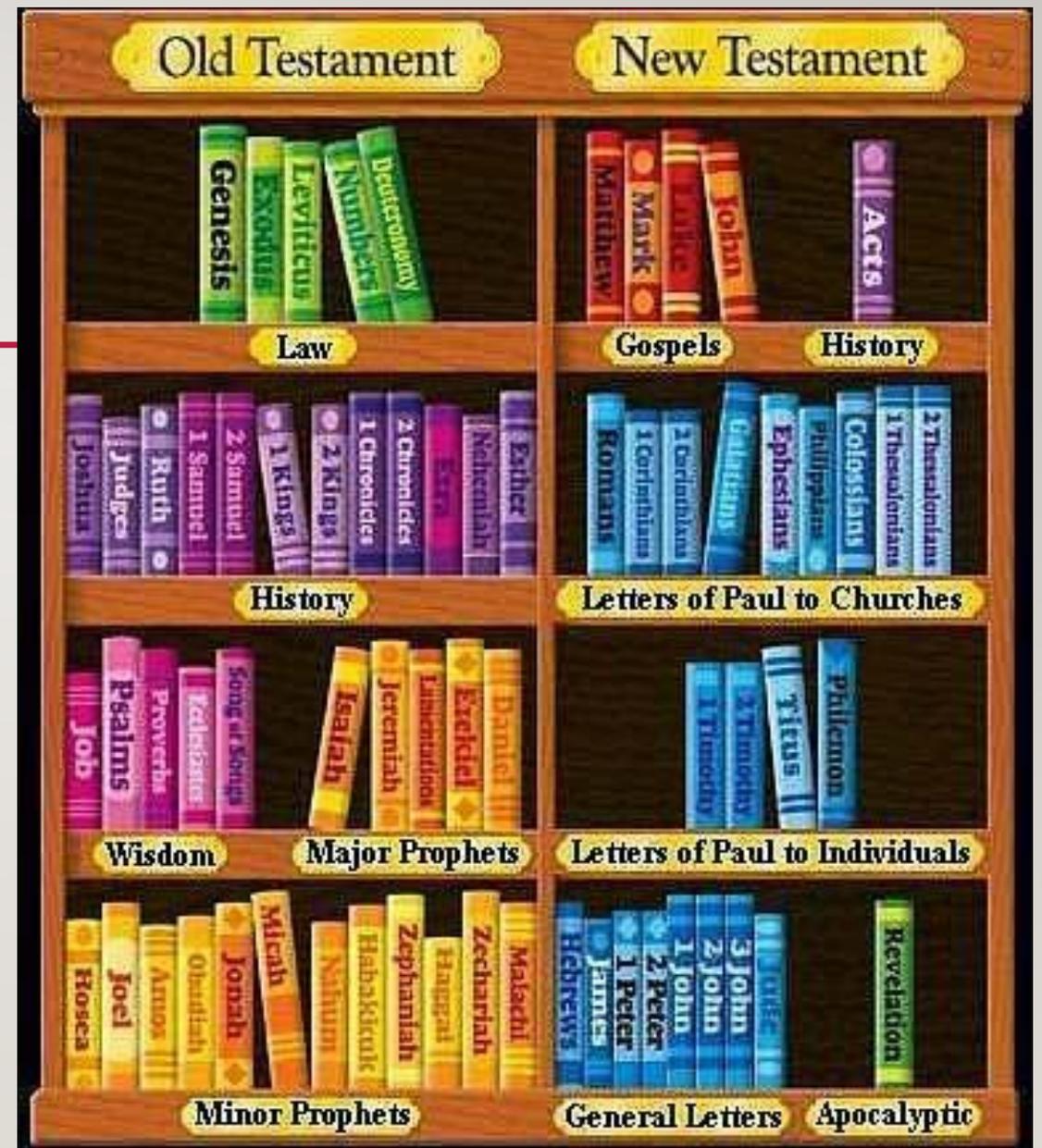
5 Law of Moses

12 History

5 Poetic

5 Major Prophets

12 Minor Prophets



MINOR PROPHETS

- “Minor” designation is not given based on the importance of the material contained, but rather the shortness of each respective writing.
- This study will basically be an “overview” of each of the 12 books
- Our goal in this study: To equip you with the proper understanding of the messages of the Minor Prophets, thereby enabling you to “*give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you...*” (1 Peter 3:9).

I. Hosea

- **Hosea:** Contemporary with Isaiah and Micah. Main theme: The apostasy of Israel characterized as spiritual adultery.
- The book is filled with striking metaphors describing the sins of the people
- More than any other prophet, Hosea linked his message closely with his personal life.
- The cycle of repentance, redemption, and restoration evident in Hosea's prophecy and even his marriage (Hosea 1:2; 3:1–3) remains intimately connected to our lives.

2. Joel

- A prophet of Judah. Main theme: National repentance and its blessing.
- Joel identified himself as the son of Pethuel, preached to the people of Judah, and expressed a great deal of interest in Jerusalem.
- The book of Joel's importance to the canon of Scripture stems from its being the first to develop an often mentioned biblical idea: the day of the Lord.
- "The day of the Lord", a time of divine judgments, may be transformed into a season of blessing.

3. Amos

- **Amos:** The herdsman-prophet was courageous reformer, denouncing selfishness and sin.
- Amos was fed up. While most of the prophets interspersed redemption and restoration in their prophecies against Israel and Judah, Amos devoted only the final five verses of his prophecy for such consolation.
- More than almost any other book of Scripture, the book of Amos holds God's people accountable for their ill-treatment of others.

4. Obadiah

- **Obadiah:** main theme: The doom of Edom and final deliverance of Israel.
- The majority of the book pronounces judgment on the foreign nation of Edom, making Obadiah one of only three prophets who pronounced judgment primarily on other nations (Nahum and Habakkuk are the others).
- Obadiah's name, meaning "worshipper" offers an interesting counterpoint to the message of judgment he pronounced on Edom, Judah's neighbor to the southeast.¹ As a worshipper, Obadiah placed himself in a position of humility before the Lord; he embraced his lowly place before the almighty God.

5. Jonah

- **Jonah:** The story of the "reluctant missionary" who was taught by bitter experience the lesson of obedience and the depth of divine mercy
- Jonah was one of only four writing prophets that Jesus mentioned by name during His earthly ministry (Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah were the others)
- We all know the story of Jonah and the three days we fast (when he was in the belly of the whale)
- The story of Sodom and Gomorrah, a story of repentance

6. Micha

- **Micha:** this book gives a dark picture of the moral condition of Israel and Judah but foretells the establishment of a Messianic kingdom in which righteousness shall prevail.
- The book of Micha provides one of the most significant prophecies of Jesus Christ's birth in all the Old Testament, pointing some seven hundred years before Christ's birth to His birthplace of Bethlehem and to His eternal nature (Micha 5:2).
- Much of Micha's book revolves around two significant predictions: one of judgment on Israel and Judah (Micha 1:1–3:12), the other of the restoration of God's people in the millennial kingdom (4:1–5:15).

7. Nahum

- **Nahum:** Main theme: The destruction of Nineveh. Judah is promised deliverance from Assyria.
- Nahum's singular focus on the impending judgment of Nineveh offers a continuation of the story that began in Jonah. Sometime around 760 BC, God sent Jonah to Nineveh to preach repentance and hope to the Assyrian people, a message they heard and adopted at least for a time.
- After allowing approximately two hundred years of powerful Assyrian kings and rulers, God announced through Nahum His plans to judge the city of Nineveh.

8. Habakkuk

- **Habakkuk:** Written in the Babylonian period. Main theme: the mysteries of providence.
- How can a just God allow a wicked nation to oppress Israel?
- Habakkuk provides us one of the most remarkable sections in all of Scripture, as it contains an extended dialogue between Habakkuk and God (Habakkuk 1–2).
- The prophet initiated this conversation based on his distress about God’s “inaction” in the world. He wanted to see God do something more, particularly in the area of justice for evildoers.
- The book of Habakkuk pictures a frustrated prophet, much like Jonah, though Habakkuk channeled his frustration into prayers and eventually praise to God, rather than trying to run from the Lord as Jonah did

9. Zephaniah

- **Zephaniah:** This book is somber in tone (كئيب) filled with threatening, but it ends in a vision of the future glory of Israel
- This book mentions the day of the Lord more than does any other book in the Old Testament, clarifying the picture of Judah's fall to Babylon and the eventual judgment and restoration of all humanity in the future.
- Zephaniah's primary target for God's message of judgment, the nation of Judah, had fallen into grievous sin under the reign of their king, Manasseh.

10. Haggai

- **Haggai:** A colleague of Zechariah. He reproves the people for slackness in building the second temple but promises a return of God's glory when the building would be completed.
- The people of Judah listened! Haggai's message to rebuild the temple was passionate, simple, and straightforward (Haggai 1:8).
- Rather than leaving them alone with the task of rebuilding, Haggai continued to preach to the Jews, encouraging them with the hope of future glory in the temple and a victory to come over the enemies of God's people (2:7–9, 21–22).

11. Zachariah

- **Zechariah:** Contemporary with Haggai. He helps to arouse the Jews to rebuild the temple. He has a series of eight visions and sees the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom.
- The book of Zechariah contains the clearest and the largest number of messianic (about the Messiah) passages among the Minor Prophets.
- Zechariah's name was appropriate to the purpose of his prophecies. His book brims over with the hope that God would remember His promises to His people, even after all the time they spent outside the land.
- The prophet used a simple structure of eight visions (Zechariah 1:1–6:15), four messages (7:1–8:23), and two oracles (9:1–14:21) to anticipate the completion of the temple and, ultimately, the future reign of the Messiah from Jerusalem.

12. Malachi

- **Malachi:** Gives a graphic picture of the closing period of the Old Testament History. He shows the necessity of reforms before the coming of the messiah.
- The people of Judah began to be exiled from the Promised Land in 605 BC, returning from Babylon seventy years later. By the time of Malachi, they had been back in the land for more than a hundred years and were looking for the blessings they expected to receive when they returned.
- Though the temple had been rebuilt, the fervor of those early returning Israelites gave way to a thorough apathy for the things of God. This led to rampant corruption among the priesthood and a spiritual lethargy among the people.



Additional Canonical Books

- The additional canonical books are nine books in the Bible and are included in the Bible, or printed in our church or in the Catholic Church.

1. Tobias (14 Chapters)
2. Yahodet (16 chapters)
3. The remainder of Esther (7 chapters)
4. The wisdom of Solomon (19 chapters)
5. Joshua the son of Sirack (51 Chapters)
6. He prophesy of Paroak (6 chapters)
7. The remainder of the book of Daniel (2 Chapters)
8. The first Makabeen (16 Chapters)
9. The second Makabeen (15 Chapters)

Conclusion

1. We must read, contemplate and digest the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.
2. The Old testament is the shadow of the New Testament
3. One of the proofs that our Christianity is true is that all the prophecies that were mentioned hundreds of years before Christ were fulfilled
4. We must acquire Coptic Orthodox books to explain the Old Testament for us and to ask questions we do not understand.
5. Our faith is a lot deeper when we study the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.

