

The Minor, Minor Prophets – Numbers 22:22-31

I. Introduction:

- A. Years ago, I met a pastor who had been dismissed from his church.
1. His people had rebelled against his leadership, and I was forced by circumstances to look into the problem.
 2. The leader of the mutiny couldn't point to any doctrinal issues; it was a matter of clashing personalities.
 3. The only thing even remotely approaching heresy was the charge that the pastor had claimed to be *"a prophet of God."*
 4. Knowing the men involved, I instantly realized that the comment was taken out of context.
 5. That in itself was not grounds for dismissal or church discipline.
- B. Most people, even many Christians, picture a *"prophet"* as someone who has insight into the future.
1. And while that is often true, the word more basically refers to someone who speaks on God's behalf.
 2. In **Genesis 20**, the king of Gerar was told by God to leave Abraham and Sarah alone.
 - a. *"Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, & he shall pray for thee, & thou shalt live..."*
 - b. God's prophet may be an *instructor* in spiritual things or an *intercessor* on behalf of the Lord.
 - c. And although there is a lot of divine prognostication **about** Abraham, as far as I can remember, he never prophesied about the future himself.
 3. And **Hebrews 1:1** says, *"God, who at sundry times and in divers matters spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken into us by his Son..."*
 4. Not every message through a prophet of God is a *"prophetic message"* – speaking about the future.
 5. Risking my dismissal from Calvary Baptist, I will mention that **I am** a *"a prophet of God."*
 6. Because I am a **preacher** of the Word of the Lord, I am also a *"a prophet of God."*
 7. But fearing that outsiders might be confused by that statement, I rarely, if ever, call myself *"a prophet."*
- C. So **there are prophets** and there are **other** prophets.
1. I.e., one of the phrases used in the New Testament to describe the Old Testament is *"the law & prophets."*
 2. That is a **Biblical** description of itself, **but men** have divided up the Old Testament books differently.
 - a. We have the *"Pentateuch,"* the 5 books of Moses. Then there are the books of Old Testament **history**.
 - b. The **Psalms**, and the **writings of Solomon** are often classified as the **poetry** of the Old Testament.
 - c. And finally, there are *"the prophets,"* some of which are relegated to the classification: *"minor prophets."*
 3. But Jesus and the disciples simply called the entire Old Testament: *"the law and prophets."*
 - a. Among several other scriptures, Christ said in **Luke 16:16** that *"the law & the prophets were until John."*
 - b. And Paul concluded **Romans 3** by saying, *"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."*
- D. But why are **Isaiah** and **Jeremiah** considered to be **major prophets**, while **Micah** and **Nahum** are **minor**?
1. Is it nothing more than **their size**, or does it have something to do with **how often** we **quote them**?
 2. And where should we put **Daniel**? Is his book major or minor?
- E. With all this in our rear view mirror, I'd like to point to **several MINOR, minor prophets**.
1. They are prophets because they were spokesmen for Jehovah, just as I try to do.
 2. And as I mention these minor, minor prophets, you may continue to think of me.
 3. Not one of these prophets forecast the future. In fact, some of them didn't even have human voices.
 4. But they all had divine lessons to share with certain Bible characters – and with us.

II. First there was BALAAM'S ASS.

- A. Yes, you may continue to think of me.
1. I hope that you know the history of Balaam.
 2. It begins in **Numbers 22**, extending into **chapter 24**, but then his story comes up in comments in seven other books, including references in the New Testament.

- B. Balaam was commissioned by Balak, an enemy of Israel, to curse the people of God.
1. As a prophet himself, Balaam knew that he had no business doing the bidding of the king of the Moabites.
 2. But he was fleshly and greedy, unable to get past the promise of great reward for his treachery.
 3. So with two of his servants he mounted his donkey and set off to negotiate with Balak and Jehovah.
 4. *“And God’s anger was kindled because he went; and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him.”*
- C. Don’t ask me why or how, but the ass he was riding could see the death angel standing in the road, and three times he took steps to avoid him.
1. But Balaam couldn’t see anything except the disobedience of his beast, so he beat him.
 2. Finally, *“The Lord opened the mouth of the ass,”* and he and his master had a little conversation.
 3. After the ass softened up the heart of Balaam, the angel stepped in and finished God’s message.
- D. This may not become clear before I give you a few more examples...
1. But the Lord often has His prophets ready with an heavenly message, if we are open to listening.
 2. We might say that this ass was one of the Lord’s *“minor, minor prophets.”*
 3. But it doesn’t matter whether major or minor, if the message is from the Lord, then we need to listen.

III. Wasn’t **ELIEZER’S WELL** another of the Lord’s minor, minor prophets?

- A. I am making an assumption, but I’m calling **Abraham’s servant** *“Eliezer”* with help from **Genesis 15:2**.
1. In **Genesis 24**, Abraham sends his servant from somewhere around Hebron up north to the city of Nahor.
 2. Eliezer, understanding the importance of the event, and not wanting to make a mistake, yearned for the **Lord’s leadership**.
 3. He prayed for **guidance**; he prayed for someone to **share God’s counsel**; he prayed for a **prophet**.
 4. When Rebekah came out to get some water from the community well, she quenched Eliezer’s thirst and even drew up enough water to slake the thirst of his ten camels.
 5. Immediately, Abraham’s servant knew that this was a message from the Lord – this was the woman who was to become Isaac’s wife.
- B. We might compare Eliezer’s journey to the average day of any one of us.
1. When he got up that morning, he knew that various responsibilities lay before him.
 2. He wanted to get them right – he wanted to please the Lord in service – so he asked for divine leadership.
 3. Because his heart was honest & surrendered, Jehovah gave to the prophet he needed – a minor prophet.

IV. In a similar way **GIDEON’S FLEECE** was one of God’s minor prophets.

- A. **Judges 6:36** – *“And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said,*
1. *Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.*
 2. *And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.*
 3. *And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.*
 4. *And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.”*
- B. I am neither going to condone, nor condemn, Gideon for what he did.
1. I’m never going to encourage you to *“put out the fleece,”* because so many things could go wrong.
 2. However, I remind you that God didn’t express any disappointment in what the man did.
 3. Once again, we see in Gideon someone who sincerely wanted to learn God’s will.
 4. He needed a prophet to guide him, and neither Elijah nor Jeremiah were there to help him.

- C. The Lord has many ways to make His will known to us, if we are willing to surrender our hearts to Him.
 1. But humble and attentive hearts don't necessarily mean the sacrifice of our minds and brains.
 2. Sometimes the Lord put's His minor, minor prophet right in front of us, and all we need to do is spend a little time in godly thought to hear the message.

V. **JONATHAN'S INVITATION was another of the Lord's minor, minor prophets.**

- A. Jonathan, Saul's son, was not getting the leadership he needed from the fallen priests of Israel.
 1. His father was a coward, and the people of God were in desperate need of revival.
 2. Jehovah's enemies, the Philistines, were decimating the heritage of the Lord.
 3. But there were a couple young men, whom the Holy Spirit had already stirred up.
 4. They were not only **praying** for **revival**, they were **willing** to **give up** their **lives** if it would mean that the nation would turn their eyes on the Lord.
 5. *I Samuel 14:6 – "And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour,*
 - a. *Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised:*
 - b. *it may be the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.*
 - c. *And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart."*
- B. Once again, these young people wanted to know the Lord's will.
 1. So Jonathan prayed seeking for a special revelation – a prophet of God, if you will.
 2. They made themselves vulnerable by climbing up on their hands & knees toward the enemy's high ground.
 3. And they determined that if the Philistines gave them an invitation and freedom to advance, then God was going to give them the victory. And of course, that is what happened.
 4. When the enemy guards said, *"Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing,"* Jonathan heard the Lord's minor prophet speaking to him.
 5. Sometimes the Lord speaks in a very still small voice.
 6. He doesn't need to roar and shout when His people are willing to listen.

VI. **One more example of a minor, minor prophet could be DAVID'S BEAR.**

- A. The Philistine Goliath was threatening Israel and dishonoring the Lord.
 1. Once again Israel was in decline and in great need of revival.
 2. When David came to the place of the stand off, he was disgusted by the words of great wicked man.
 3. *"Why doesn't someone do something about this blasphemy?" "Is there not a cause?"*
 4. When David was brought before Saul, the King was astounded by David's fearlessness, which he might have initially defined as *"bravado."*
 5. But David insisted that he be permitted to fight on behalf of the Lord and His people.
 6. And he cited a couple of the Lord's minor, minor prophets who were encouraging him.
 7. *"David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.*
 - a. *Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:*
 - b. *And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.*
 - c. *Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God."*
- B. David was encouraged in his fight for the glory of God, not by any particular personal pride.
 1. He didn't really have much more than a passing interest in the reward that was offered.
 2. Rather, he was disgusted by the sinful words of enemy; by the blasphemy.
 3. And he reached back into the Sunday School lessons he learned while tending his father's sheep.
 4. *"This monster of a man is no more powerful or deadly than a hulking bear or a nimble lion.*
 5. *God has told me through those predators that his wicked man is going down."* And he did.

VII. Now for a couple of concluding thoughts.

- A. When it comes to **potential prophets** it is essential to **check** their **qualifications**.
 1. **Moses** warned Israel on several occasions to **beware of false prophets**.
 2. In **Deuteronomy 18:22** he said, *“When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which **the Lord** hath **NOT** spoken, but the prophet hath spoken presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him.”*
 3. **Deuteronomy 13:5** – *“That prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death...”*
 4. But what if that is the man’s first prophecy, so there is no former prognostication with which to test him?
 5. That certainly makes things more difficult.
 6. But there is one practical rule which is always available to the child of God.
 7. No prophet of God – major, minor, or minor, minor, will say anything which contracts the written word.

- B. With God’s help, every message I share with you will be filled with the Word of God.
 1. I’m not talking about beginning with a scripture never to return to it again.
 2. Nor am I talking about using a few proof texts to justify my opinions.
 3. Pray for me that my sermons, messages and Bible lessons will be filled with scripture.
 4. **There** is the greatest test of any modern prophet – whether major, minor or minor, minor.
 5. If some preacher elevates himself from minor prophet to major prophet through this eloquence or oratory, but his messages do not contain plenty of *“thus saith the Lord,”* then we need to apply the words of Moses.
 6. Or perhaps we should use the words of Paul in **Romans 16:17** – *“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause division and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”*