

Larchmont UMC – Weekday Bible Study
Wednesdays at 10AM – Fall, 2022
THE MINOR PROPHETS

"May the bones of the Twelve Prophets send forth new life from where they lie, for they comforted the people of Jacob and delivered them with confident hope." -Book of Ben Sira (from the Apocrypha)

We'll be studying each of the twelve minor prophets in their chronological order, which isn't always the same as the order in the Bible. No one is sure of dates for many of these prophets. Since we are using videos from the Bible Project each week, we'll follow their timeline.

Please try and read the scripture for each prophet before each class. Reading the prophets is difficult, and this guide is intended to help. Each prophet's book can be read in sections (we are following the division of the Bible Project) to make it easier to digest.

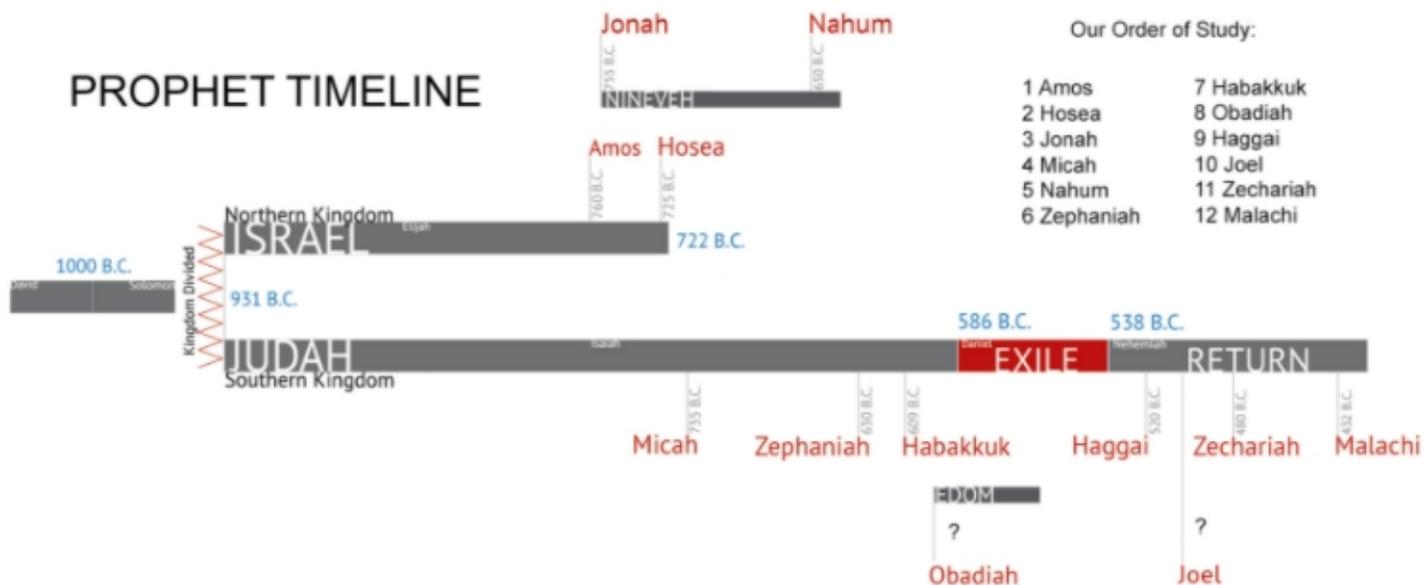
Please bring this guide with you on Wednesdays, AND your favorite Bible translation. If you forget, don't fret.

If you don't have time to read, or you need to miss some sessions, don't worry! Come on down anyway when you can. The class is a judgment-free zone.

PS: feel free to cheat. If you have internet access you can go to the Bible Project web site and watch the video we'll be looking at each session. These are all under 10 minutes each.

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/book-overviews/>

Also, short summaries by evangelist Chuck Swindoll are attached at the end of this guide.



Week 1 – Amos – Sept 14

Who was he? He is described by a word translated into English as "shepherd" but in Hebrew this can mean owner or breeder of sheep. His home of Tekoa was most likely about 12 miles south of Jerusalem (about six miles south of Bethlehem).

Amos is arguably the first of the minor prophets. The reference to a documented earthquake during the reign of King Uzziah puts him at about 760 BC. A native of the southern kingdom, he went north to preach against what was happening there. This was a time when Israel was wealthy.



Chapters 1-2: message to the nations and Israel. Focus on what is making Amos (and God) super hot. He condemns basically all of Israel's neighbors for crimes against humanity: Aram (Syria), several Philistine city-states (Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron), Tyre (Lebanon), Edom (south of Judah), Ammon (east of Israel) and Moab (east of Judah). He then turns to condemn Israel for similar crimes -- and starts specifying them.

Chapters 3-6: message to Israel and its leaders. Amos speaks about what God has done for his people. Amos is called to warn them what will happen to covenant-breakers!

Amos compares the people of Israel to fat-and-happy cattle. Note the things that the rich are doing; Amos really calls them out for a lot of stuff. Write some of them down. Sounds modern, doesn't it? Look at 5:24. Do you know where this is engraved (think: 1960s)? What is the hypocrisy that Amos is condemning?

Chapters 7-9: Amos' visions. Why does Amos use symbols like locust swarms instead of just saying enemies are coming?

Amos then calls out one of Israel's priests. It is surprising that a priest opposed Amos? Is it surprising that Amos specifically names his opposition here?

Can you see a glimmer of hope at the end of the book? Look at how this is quoted starting at Acts 15:15!

Week 2 – Hosea – Sept 21

Who was he? His name is the same as Joshua ("God rescues"), which is the same as Jesus (Yeshua). A number of kings are mentioned in this book, which likely means he was a prophet for 60 years! He may have been a contemporary of Isaiah, in the mid 700s BC, at a time that the northern kingdom was doing pretty well, shortly before the Assyrians invaded and destroyed the land.

FYI the book refers to "Ephraim" which seems to be Hosea's preferred name for the northern kingdom. Ephraim was a son of Joseph (who was a son of Jacob) and his descendants were one of the twelve tribes. Joshua who led the Israelites into the Promised Land was a son of this house. The tribe of Ephraim got choice land including some holy sites. In Hosea's day, the kings of the northern kingdom were of Ephraim. Also, when the book refers to "Samaria" it is the capital city of the northern kingdom, not the land of the New Testament. Lastly, Baal gets a lot of publicity in Hosea. He was a popular god in a lot of the Mideast. He was both a powerful storm god as well as a god of fertility.

Chapters 1-3 -- Hosea's marriage to Gomer. This is one of the few actual "story lines" in the minor prophets. Mrs Hosea was stunningly unfaithful. Your translation may even refer to her as a prostitute. It is pretty obvious that this family story is intended to parallel Israel's unfaithfulness to God.

Note what they name Gomer's children! Hosea though must pay off her debts to redeem her; God tells him to do so. Do you see hope here for the restoration of the family in this first section?

Chapters 4-11 -- accusations and warnings for Israel. OK so Hosea was a prophet for a long time and had a lot to say. Some of it repeatedly! Don't panic (this there are only two long books in minor prophets). Feel free to skim quickly through this section. Chapter 11 is sort of a summary, so focus there.

Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6 a couple of times -- see Matthew 9:13 and 12:7.

Hosea calls out the people, the leaders, and even the priests. The big failing is that Israel no longer has a relationship with God. Instead, Israel has picked up foreign gods like Baal (and his calf or bull idol). Also, they think their treaties with other states will protect them. Hosea says that despite this, God still loves his people and will have compassion for them. Do you see child/parent references?

Chapters 12-14 -- even more accusations and warnings. Can you imagine Hosea as a prosecutor presenting the evidence against Israel? He even points to all the rebellions in Israel's past. He calls for repentance but knows it won't last. But Hosea says that God will heal his people and fulfill the promises to Abraham.

Does your translation say 14:9 is an "epilogue"? Commentary says this statement at the very end was added by whoever collected Hosea's words, which was likely during or after years of exile. The Message Bible translates this verse:

If you want to live well, make sure you understand all of this. If you know what's good for you, you'll learn this inside and out. God's paths get you where you want to go. Right-living people walk them easily; wrong-living people are always tripping and stumbling.

Week 3 – Jonah – Sept 28

Who was he? He is mentioned at 2 Kings 14:25 as being a prophet to Jeroboam II in the northern kingdom before the Assyrians rolled in, around the same time as Amos: "He (Jeroboam) restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which He spoke through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher."

Jonah is the only Old Testament prophet on record whom God sent to a foreign nation specifically with a message of repentance. This book is mostly about Jonah himself and not what he was called to say. Some look at this story as a parable. It may be satire: no character does what is expected!

Chapter 1 -- Jonah and the sailors. God tells Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, which in a few years would destroy the northern kingdom. How many other prophets refused God? Jonah takes off for the furthest place the Jews knew, crossing the sea which historically the Jews feared as a source of destruction. Do you think that Jonah believed he could go off the grid from God?



Why do you think Jonah told the sailors to throw him overboard?

Chapter 2 -- repentance. Did Jonah think he was dead? The Jews were familiar with the myth of Leviathan, a sea monster which represented chaos. Why would God send that, not a floating piece of wood or similar for Jonah?

One writer outlined Jonah's prayer as follows. The prophet prayed for God's help, accepted God's discipline, trusted God's promises, and yielded to God's will.

Where does Jesus mention Jonah? Hint: Matthew 12:38-42, Matthew 16:4, Luke 11:29-32.

Chapter 3 -- Jonah at Nineveh. He gets a second chance; can you think of New Testament figures who also got a second chance? Does it sound like Jonah spent a lot of preaching? Why are animals involved in the repentance? Note the very end of Jonah where God mentions cattle.

Chapter 4 -- Jonah criticizes God. Jonah sits outside the city hoping for destruction. He is in such a snit that he says he would rather be dead! Aren't there days when we are like Jonah, angry with God? What if you had been sent to Hitler to preach, or to Putin?

What is the point of the plant at the end of the story?

Week 4 – Micah – Oct 5

Who was he? He was from a town about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem. He witnessed the destruction of the northern kingdom by Assyria and he predicted a similar fate for the southern kingdom too. Micah gets play in the New Testament: Micah 5:2-5 at Matthew 2:1-6 -- look up the gospel reference, you will know it! There is also a reference at Matthew 10:35-36 to Micah 7:6. Check it out.

Years later, the leaders of Judah were thinking about killing the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah 26 says:

Then some of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying, "Micah of Moresheth used to prophesy in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; and he spoke to all the people of Judah ... Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah actually put him to death? Did he not fear the Lord and plead for the favor of the Lord, and the Lord relented of the disaster which He had pronounced against them?"

Some believe the people who saved the prophets' writings squeezed a future prophet into Micah's book (Micah being shortly after the north was destroyed, and the other prophet after Jerusalem was destroyed) but there isn't compelling evidence. Either way, the book is consistent in speaking about healing after disaster. Each section starts with LISTEN.

Chapters 1-3 -- judgment and redemption against Judah and their leaders. As with other prophets, Micah names places where bad stuff is happening. Also as with other prophets, look at the specific wrongs the people are doing. Wow, these are just like today, aren't they?

Chapters 4-5 -- restoration. Immediately this turns into a global peace package -- note 4:3 -- do you know about the UN statue with this?

As Christians, we are really interested in the Bethlehem references (noted above). Please focus on this bit of scripture!

Chapters 6-7 -- God's lawsuit against Israel and hope. This section starts as a court case. Those who know about courts, does this sound like a complaint that would be filed today? It moves on to what God wants as "damages" -- not money, not a thousand rams sacrificed, but *"He wants you to carry out justice, to love faithfulness, and to live obediently before your God."*

This section ends with Micah despondent. But look at his conclusion at 7:18-20. There was hope then, and hope now!

Week 5 – Nahum – Oct 12

Who was he? Nahum probably prophesied after the northern kingdom had been blown out by the Assyrians but while the southern kingdom was still intact. Commentary says we should read his condemnation of Assyria as meaning that evil forces do not last forever.



Time permitting, you can take a look at 2 Kings 17 to see what happened to the northern kingdom.

Chapter 1 -- God appears. Take a look at what Nahum quoted: Exodus 34:6 -- *"The Lord passed before him (Moses) and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."* Nahum is talking about Assyria but is really focused on the REMNANT of Israel that will survive this!

Paul quotes Nahum in his letter to the Romans (10:15): *And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*

Chapter 2 -- the fall of Nineveh. We see the forces of Assyria going into battle and being defeated. Commentary is that this isn't just Assyria being destroyed. It is every cohort that is in opposition to the will of God that will ultimately fail. Consider: who is this now?

Chapter 3 -- Nahum concludes with information about Babylon, which succeeded Assyria. But he does not celebrate the success of violence. Oppression is condemned then, and should we not agree with that today?

Ultimately, Nahum is about justice. How can we approach that in our day?

Week 6 – Zephaniah – Oct 19

Who was he? A prophet after the Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom, he was active in the later years of the southern kingdom during the reign of Josiah. The kings of Judea in those years were caught up in fighting between the Assyrians plus their Egyptian allies and the new Babylonian empire which would eventually defeat them all. Ultimately the Babylonians took a number of Judeans to exile in the east, after the time of Zephaniah.

There are a number of "Z" names in the Old Testament, including a few Zephaniahs. The person who collected this Zephaniah's prophecies included his ancestors' names in the intro to the book to help us out. His forebearers included Hezekiah, a previous king of Judea. Note that there is an unrelated Zephaniah, a priest, shortly after the prophet's time who was involved in rebellion against Babylon (things did not go well for this priest).

Zephaniah appears to have had access to the elites, which makes sense if he were a descendant of a king. But this doesn't mean he was nice to the leaders he probably knew!

Chapters 1-2:3 -- judgment on Jerusalem. We see another reversal of creation, a descent into chaos. Judea is about to be undone. However, note that the army that is going to do this isn't named, because the Babylonians are just instruments of God's will.

Zephaniah is really big on an apocalyptic "Day of the Lord" See 1:7. How does your translation have this term? What do you think it means?

In the end of this section, he appeals to the faithful remnant, because they will be spared.

Chapters 2:4-3:8 -- judgment on the nations. More doom and gloom, if you are tired of woe you can speedily go through this section. Like Amos (see week 1), Zephaniah says the surrounding countries are corrupt too and are facing destruction.

Chapter 3:9-20 -- hope. OK this is where this book gets interesting. Zephaniah focuses on the reason for all the destruction: afterwards the peoples of the nations, more than just the Israelites, will be restored ("clean lips" in many translations). Restored to what?

This is a section, especially 3:17 and forward, that Christians notice because it sounds like the end of Revelation (21-22) in using a purified Jerusalem as a symbol of a purified world. Notice who God welcomes in at the end of Zephaniah!

Week 7 – Habakkuk – Oct 26

Little is revealed about Habakkuk, except that he must have been prophesying at the end of the southern kingdom right before the Babylonians took Jerusalem and exiled its leadership.

This book is very different -- because the prophet is trying to believe in God when there is so much tragedy in the world. He is addressing God in his poetry. He wants God to do something! The scripture can be confusing because the reader may be unclear when it is the prophet speaking, or when it is God responding. Some translations have headers pointing this out, and these breaks are noted below.

Chapters 1-2:1 -- God speaks with the prophet. In 1:1-4, it is Habakkuk wondering "why bad things happen to good people." In 1:5-11, God responds that he use Babylon to punish Israel. But Habakkuk says in 1:12-2:1 that Babylon is worse!

Do you think Habakkuk sounds like Jonah, or more like Job?

Chapter 2 -- justice will come. In the rest of Chapter 2, God tells Habakkuk to be patient.

Take a look at 2:4. Does this sound familiar? Paul quotes this several times in his letters. For example, Romans 1:17: *For the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith, just as it is written, "The righteous by faith will live."*

God pronounces a series of woes, probably not just on Babylon but on all who loot -- they will eventually be looted! Take a look at the woes:

Woe #1: greed/exploitation.

Woe #2: economic oppression.

Woe #3: violence.

Woe #4: drinking/ravenous behavior.

Woe #5: idolatry.

Chapter 3 -- Habakkuk's prayer. This may have been a song! The Hebrew word "selah" only appears in this book and in Psalms. Does your translation include it? Is there an explanation? This usually isn't translated as it is unclear what it means. It might mean a pause, like between verses in signing hymns.

There are "flashbacks" and "flashforwards" in this prayer. You might see references to creation, and perhaps a new creation. Likewise, there are references to the original Exodus and the Mount Sinai story, and perhaps a future one too.

At the end of the chapter, Habakkuk says that even when bad stuff is happening to good people, he will ... what? Can we do that too?

Week 8 – Obadiah – Nov 2

Who was he? There are several Obadiah's in the Old Testament but none are identified as being this prophet. Only this book and Malachi don't contain any info on the prophets at the beginning of the scriptures.

The dating of this book is also unclear. When did the hostile actions of Edom against Judah take place? One possibility is in 2 Kings 8:20 which would make Obadiah one of the first prophets. Most scholars believe that Obadiah is writing of the Edomites' treachery in attacking Judah along with the Babylonians who took Jerusalem. This is noted in Ezekiel 25:12-14:

The Lord God says this: "Because Edom has acted against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has incurred great guilt, and avenged themselves upon them," therefore this is what the Lord God says: "I will also reach out with My hand against Edom and eliminate human and animal life from it. And I will turn it into ruins; from Teman even to Dedan they will fall by the sword. And I will inflict My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel. Therefore, they will act in Edom in accordance with My anger and My wrath; so they will know My vengeance," declares the Lord God.

Family fights are painful to watch. Edom was to the south of Judea, the land of Esau the brother of Jacob, son of Isaac, and grandson of Abraham. You'll remember that Esau was outsmarted (cheated?) by Jacob. He had a nickname, Edom, meaning red like his hair -- or red like the lentil soup he ate in exchange for his birthright.

The Edomites get mentioned as unfriendly during the Exodus, as seen in Numbers 20:14-20.

One other comment about the land of Edom in the time of Jesus (you may see it as Idumaea on NT maps). It had been annexed to Israel about 150 years before Jesus and the people were required to convert to Judaism. Herod the Great was a native of this territory, thus considered something of an outsider. Herod tried to ingratiate himself with his subjects by renovating the temple complex in Jerusalem. The people loved the temple, but not Herod!

Obadiah is a very short book (yay!), smallest in the OT. It is full of the language of doom against the treacherous neighbors -- which we can view as language of hope for the people of Judah.

Chapter 1:1-14 -- accusations against Edom. Some scholars say this section sounds like an ancient lawsuit. Also, Obadiah is particularly offended by the Edomites' pride.

Chapter 1:15-21 -- Day of the Lord. The book doesn't conclude with more venom against Edom specifically. Rather, the prophet says judgment is coming for ALL nations.

But wait, there is more! Take a look particularly at the prophecy about a faithful remnant and a new Jerusalem. From there, God's territory will expand.

Obadiah is not quoted explicitly in the New Testament, but that language sure seems familiar.

Week 9 – Haggai – Nov 9

Nothing "personal" about Haggai is known but it is clear that he was in Jerusalem after the Persians had overthrown the Babylonians and allowed the Judean exiles to begin returning home (about 500 years before Jesus). He is in the book of Ezra (chapter 5) fussing at Zerubbabel, who had been appointed governor of Judea. Zerubbabel was part of the family of the Judean kings who had been removed by the Babylonians. Apparently he was esteemed by both the Persians and the Judeans who returned with him to Jerusalem. Haggai also exhorts the new high priest Joshua (Yeshua) to get busy. The priest is seen in Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah, and seems to be portrayed positively in all four. The priest's sons, not so much, but that is a story for another day.

If you had been a Judean then, with family and assets elsewhere in the Persian empire, would you have made this journey? Do you think this issue is any different than people of today wondering if they should leave where they have settled to move back home to be closer to family?

This is another very short book (also yay!). What is different here is the book records that the messages in it were delivered only over a few short months about a specific failing of the people.

Chapter 1:1-15 -- accusations. Haggai prophesies that it is wrong for the people to be building their houses and not rebuilding the temple.

He is quoting Deuteronomy 28:22-24 which speaks of what happens when you ignore the covenant:

The Lord will strike you with consumption, inflammation, fever, feverish heat, and with the sword, with blight, and with mildew, and they will pursue you until you perish. The heaven which is over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you, iron. The Lord will make the rain of your land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.

Chapter 2:1-9 -- unfulfilled expectations. The new temple is but a shadow of the old. Here Haggai points to older prophecy (like Isaiah) about a future new Jerusalem and the coming of other nations.

Chapter 2:10-19 -- a call to the covenant. Haggai goes to the priests and asks them about ritual purity. He turns this into a warning that apathy is as bad! God is waiting for his people to be faithful.

Chapter 2:20-23 -- future hope. Here Haggai speaks of the new Jerusalem as well as something else: a messianic king, and the defeat of evil. Is it really Zerubbabel? Hint: you can find Zerubbabel in Matthew 1 and Luke 3!

Week 10 – Joel – Nov 16

Who was he? The only info is that his father was named Pethuel. Nor are there many clues on when it was written. Some experts opine that Joel was one of the first prophets. Others think the opposite: that Joel was preaching to Judah after the exile was over. He seems to have knowledge of many other prophets, doesn't accuse the Israelites of specific sins, and doesn't mention any kings. Thus he may have been in Persian times.

Ultimately for Christians the date is less important than our understanding that Joel points to Jesus.

Chapters 1 - 2:17 -- a Day of the Lord. Lots of locusts here, but notice that Egypt isn't the target. As with other prophets, Joel calls for repentance.

Commentary says the verbs in end of this section are future tense, about a future Day of the Lord, future judgment that will be huge. Many say that this is really about End Times.

Chapters 2:18-27 -- God's response. God starts talking about restoration. How does your Bible translate 2:18? God says even wild animals will be better off.

Look particularly at verse 27. Where will God be? In the midst of his people! This is starting to sound like Revelation...

Chapters 2:19-3 -- future Day of the Lord. Sounding like Revelation: but wait there is more! The Spirit will fill all God's people without age, gender or class distinctions. Do you see who will be saved? Hint: 2:32.

Joel writes of the "Valley of Jehoshaphat." Huh? That's this:



It could be a reference to a king of Judah who won a victory in the Kidron Valley, which is down from the Temple Mount. The name means "Yahweh judges" and your translation probably has notes about this being the "Valley of Decision." God will judge the whole world. Evil will be defeated, violence will cease, and the time of renewal will arrive. Joel sounds very End Times in this section! In fact, there are some beliefs that messianic or End Times will start in the Kidron Valley and many cemeteries are there, awaiting this.

Joel gets a big shout-out from Peter in the Book of Acts at Pentecost. Take a look at Acts 2:14 and forward. Is Peter talking about something that has already happened (Jesus' presence in the world), or something in the future?

Paul quotes Joel in Romans 10:12-13. *For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, who richly blesses all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

Week 11 – Zechariah – Nov 30

Who was he? In Ezra/Nehemiah, a priest named Iddo was one of the first group to return to Jerusalem from exile, and Zechariah is identified as either his son or grandson, meaning this prophet was also a priest. Zechariah and Haggai were contemporaries and both were preaching about the importance of rebuilding the temple. King Darius of Persia was in favor of this, so he indirectly gets a thumbs-up in this scripture. Darius was interested in bolstering local institutions to enhance loyalty -- and to increase tax revenues.

Zechariah's book is loaded with symbolism (it is definitely a weird read) about God's work of renewal in the world. Full disclosure: this and Hosea are the longest books of the minor prophets. If you feel overwhelmed, just skim through the readings of the major points below.

Many experts suggest that this book is the most messianic work of the Old Testament. They also note that to explain the changes that will happen with the breakthrough of God's kingdom into the world, the prophet uses End Times language to illustrate just how radical that day will be. Zechariah's visions are so overwhelming to him (and to us) that he gets an angel for an interpreter in the first eight chapters.

Chapter 1:1-1:6 -- introduction. Zechariah tells the people not to be like their ancestors (classic prophet stuff), and they seem to listen to him.

Chapters 1:7-6 -- dream visions. There are eight:

--A vision of horses (various colors of unclear meaning), symbolizing God's patrol on the earth. This is sort of the opposite of Revelation 6:4! Here God expresses compassion for Jerusalem and his people.

--A vision of four horns and four blacksmiths. Horns are a symbol of power, thus a stand-in for empires. The smiths (Persia) have smacked these empires and allowed the people of Judah to return home.



--A vision of a surveyor. Why is he measuring? To plan a layout for a restored Jerusalem, either in Zechariah's day, or future times. Where is God going to be? Take a look at 2:10-13.

--A vision of the high priest. Joshua is dirty, carrying the sins of the people. He is dressed in clean clothes, symbolizing forgiveness. There is a branch and a stone. Huh? Both are messianic references: branch of David, and, for stone, think cornerstone (sound familiar?).

--A vision of a lampstand and olive trees. What does a lampstand do? Supports light-giving lamps. The previous vision upheld the high priest; this one supports the civil governor Zerubbabel. The fuel is never-ending, enabled by God. Two olive trees: Joshua and Zerubbabel. Revelation 11:4 seems to reference this too.

--A vision of a flying scroll. The scroll here is the written word of God now in action. It is the size of a modern billboard so everyone can read it. The scroll in action is to bring down evildoers.

--A vision of a woman in a basket. She represents wickedness, perhaps the totality of the peoples' sins, caught in a basket and carried away. She is exiled to a distant land, similar to Revelation 17.

--A vision of four chariots. The visions have cycled back to the beginning. The horsemen head out in all directions to bring universal judgment to the world. Israel's enemies are defeated and peace has broken out.

This section wraps up with Zechariah saying he is giving Joshua a crown. That would make him a priest and a king. Literally? Perhaps, but here again is a messianic "branch" reference. We know who that is!

Chapters 7-8 -- fasting. The people are experiencing "woe fatigue" and want to know if they can quit grieving for the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Look at the zinger that the prophet throws back at them in 7:4-7. Wow!

Zechariah then preaches about ethical treatment of others, and gives one more call for faithfulness. He adds that future fasting/worship will not be a burden, but will be: joyful. Does this sound different to you than other prophets?

Chapters 9-14 -- the coming of the messiah. From chapter 9 on, the tone is very different, so much so that many have argued that it is a different prophet. Regardless, the rest of the book is almost entirely about the future, and many of the images are stunningly difficult to decipher. For that reason, we will focus on the passages that point to a messiah.

Chapter 9:9-10 -- the entry of Zion's king. All four gospels include these details in the account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem; Matthew and John directly quote this passage. The king does not arrive on a war horse to rule oppressively (see Psalm 33:16-17), but arrives humbly.

Chapter 11:13 -- 30 pieces of silver. This was the price of a slave, the money paid to Judas for betrayal. What was done with the money that Judas threw back at the chief priests? Hint: Matthew 27.

Chapter 12:10-13:1 -- a pierced messiah. See John 19:33-34 for the corresponding gospel reference. But look what happens: a fountain is opened!

Chapter 13:7 -- shepherd. Note that elsewhere in this book, there are some bad shepherds (bad leaders). But Jesus directly quotes this verse in Matthew 26:31 and Mark 14:27. What did Jesus say was going to happen to his sheep?

Chapter 14:4 -- Mount of Olives. This site is God's footstool, and it is where Jesus began his entry into Jerusalem (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). Also: take a look at Acts 1 for the site of the Ascension.

Question: having looked at the book of Zechariah, is it any surprise that the Jews of Jesus' day were expecting a violent arrival of the messiah? That said, the book concludes with everyone of faith worshiping in the new temple (as in Revelation).

Week 12 – Malachi – Dec 7

Who was he? There is no personal info about him in his book, and nowhere else does this name appear. The name means “messenger”, so perhaps this is a title not a name. The details in this scripture place him in the period of Persian rule, decades after the return, during a time of peace when the people were fat and happy (about 450 years before Jesus). He is warning of consequences, but also prophesies about the coming messiah.

If the writings of earlier prophets sound like court cases, Malachi sounds more like a family dispute. A parent makes an accusation, the child denies it, and the parent discusses consequences.

Chapter 1:1-5 -- God's love for Israel. The point of this section is to remind the Jews of the restored community that they are not forgotten and the covenant with God is still strong.

Chapter 1:6-2:9 -- the priests' poor performance. The Law required animals for sacrifice to be healthy, but the priests have become indifferent enough that let this slide. God would have them shut down rather than have worship become second-rate.

Chapter 2:10-16 -- mixed marriages and divorces. Jewish men of the day were marrying non-Jewish women, and the resulting families were worshiping deities other than God (as reported in Nehemiah 13). What the prophet here condemns is men divorcing their Jewish wives for presumably younger non-Jewish women. He calls on people to be faithful to God and to their spouses.

Chapter 2:17-3:6 -- wondering about God's justice. Is it missing? What follows is the first messianic prophecy of the book. Christians will recognize it from three of four gospels. Does your bible have red letters? Jesus directly quotes this scripture in Matthew 11:7-15. Malachi says justice is coming!

Chapter 3:7-12 -- robbing God. Here the prophet points out that the people have become apathetic and aren't giving (tithing) as they should. Doesn't Malachi sound increasingly modern as this book proceeds?

Chapter 3:13-4:3 -- the arrogant and the humble. Malachi now doubles down on his criticism of the people. Many are worse than apathetic, they have decided that following God is foolish. Talk about modern! The prophet says the arrogant will get what is coming to them, but God will remember the humble.

Here he mentions "healing wings" -- do you remember the gospel story about the woman who touches the fringes of Jesus' clothing?

Chapter 4:4-6 -- a concluding promise. Elijah is coming! To this day, Passover meals include an empty chair for Elijah, hoping for his return to announce the messiah. Jesus and some disciples discussed this scripture (see Mark 9:11-13); Elijah had already come! The forerunner John had fulfilled this prophecy. There is probably an End Times component in this section of Malachi as well as in Jesus' words in Mark. Elijah/John may come again as part of Jesus' return as part of the restoration of the world.

We are waiting!

Appendix: Chuck Swindoll's overviews of the minor prophets

1

AMOS

	Introduction A shepherd's vision CHAPTER 1:1-2	Oracles against the Nations Damascus Gaza Tyre Edom Ammon Moab Judah Israel CHAPTERS 1:3-2:16	Sermons against Nation of Israel Hear this word . . . sons of Israel (3:1) . . . you cows of Bashan (4:1) . . . house of Israel (5:1) CHAPTERS 3-6	Visions of Judgment Locusts Fire Plumb line Ripe fruit The Lord by the altar CHAPTERS 7:1-9:10	Promises of Hope "In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David. . . . I will also plant them on their land." (9:11, 15) CHAPTER 9:11-15
Theme	Israel's coming judgment for treating others with injustice				
Key Verses	3:1-2; 4:12; 5:15, 24				
Christ in Amos	Jesus Christ, who has all authority to judge, is also the One who restores His people.				

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HOSEA

	PERSONAL The Agony of an Unfaithful Mate Marriage Children Separation Reunion CHAPTERS 1-3	NATIONAL The Tragedy of an Unfaithful People Series of sermons declaring the sin of the people and the character of God Model of the message as Hosea remains true to his wife in spite of her infidelity CHAPTERS 4-14
	Adulterous wife yet faithful husband	Adulterous nation yet faithful God
	God: "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry." (1:2)	God: "Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress." (3:1)
	Nation is guilty. God is holy.	Nation needs judgment. God is just. Nation has hope. God is love.
Theme	God's faithful love toward His unfaithful people	
Key Verses	2:19-20; 3:1; 11:1-12	
Christ in Hosea	Christ's being "called out" from hiding in Egypt as a child is pictured in Hosea's record of Israel's exodus from Egypt (11:1; see also Matthew 2:15). In Hosea's redemption of Gomer from the slave market, Christ is pictured as the loving, faithful Redeemer of sinful humanity.	

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2

3

JONAH

	Running from God First commission of Jonah Results of disobedience CHAPTER 1	Running to God Prayer of Jonah Communication with the Lord CHAPTER 2	Running with God Second commission of Jonah Results of obedience CHAPTER 3	Running against God Prejudice of Jonah Lessons from the Lord CHAPTER 4
Theme	God's infinite mercy for all people; our reluctance to share His mercy			
Key Verses	2:9; 4:11			
Christ in Jonah	Jonah's three days in the fish anticipates Christ's death and resurrection. The Ninevites' salvation represents the salvation available to all people in Christ.			

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MICAH

	An Announcement of Judgment <i>Hear, O peoples . . . / Listen, O earth. (1:2)</i> <u>The capitals will be destroyed</u> <u>Reasons for judgment</u> CHAPTERS 1-2	A Contrast of Kingdoms <i>"Hear now, heads of Jacob / And rulers." (3:1)</i> <u>Human corruption</u> <u>Divine restoration</u> CHAPTERS 3-5	A Case against Sin and a Promise of Restoration Hear now what the Lord is saying. (6:1) <u>God's indictment</u> <u>Authentic spirituality</u> <u>Judah's sins</u> <u>Messianic mercy</u> CHAPTERS 6-7
Theme	Micah shows that a true relationship with God is inextricably linked to how we treat one another. Micah contrasts Judah's sinful kingdom with God's righteous and just messianic kingdom.		
Key Verse	6:8		
Christ in Micah	Jesus's birth in Bethlehem is predicted in 5:2; His righteous reign over all the earth is described in 2:12-13; 4:1-8; 5:4-5.		

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NAHUM

	The Character and Power of God His majestic attributes and abilities in contrast to humanity's schemes CHAPTER 1	The Judgment of God <u>Predicted and described</u> <u>Justified and defended</u> <u>Inevitable and inescapable</u> CHAPTERS 2-3
Content	Theological	Prophetical
Emphasis	The majestic character of our sovereign God qualifies Him to be the Judge over all.	Nineveh's willful and heartless decline justifies the judgment of almighty God.
Theme	The impending doom of Ninevah, capital of Assyria	
Key Verses	1:3; 3:1	
Christ in Nahum	Christ will judge the nations, freeing His people once and for all from their enemies.	

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ZEPHANIAH

	Judgment and Doom "I will completely remove all things from the face of the earth," declares the Lord. (1:2)				Joy and Deliverance
INTRODUCTION (1:1)	DIVINE JUDGMENT ON JUDAH CHAPTER 1:2-18	INVITATION CHAPTER 2:1-3	SURE DOOM OF NATIONS CHAPTER 2:4-15	SURE DOOM OF JERUSALEM CHAPTER 3:1-8	KINGDOM PROMISES TO REMNANT CHAPTER 3:9-20
	Judah		Nations		Remnant
Subject	Sin	Hope	Desolation		Restoration
Key Words	"The day of the Lord"	"Seek"	"Woe"		The Lord is with you
Theme	Judgment and doom are certain unless there is repentance before God. Only then can there be hope and restoration.				
Key Verses	1:14; 2:3				
Christ in Zephaniah	Jesus Christ hides us from God's wrath, and is the One who will someday rule the earth as King of Israel (Zephaniah 3:15-17; see Colossians 3:3-4).				

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HABAKKUK

Habakkuk's Dialogue with God				Habakkuk's Praise to God
The Burden	The Watch	The Vision		
Wrestling with: God's silence Judah's sinfulness God's character Questions: How long? Why? Who? CHAPTER 1	Waiting for <u>an answer</u> CHAPTER 2:1	<u>Record the vision!</u> <u>Wait for it!</u> <u>Woe to the Babylonians!</u> CHAPTER 2:2-20	Lord, I've heard . . . I stand in awe . . . I wait . . . I praise . . . I rejoice CHAPTER 3	
Confession	"Lord . . . You confuse me."		"Lord . . . I wait for You."	
Perspective	Horizontal		Vertical	
Direction	Looking around and worrying	Looking up and listening		Looking ahead and believing
Theme	Habakkuk's wrestling with God over His unfathomable ways and the prophet's resulting faith			
Key Verses	2:4; 3:17-19			
Christ in Habakkuk	Those who have been made righteous in Christ must "live by [their] faith" (2:4). When Christ comes again, "the earth will be filled / With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, / As the waters cover the sea" (2:14).			

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OBADIAH

Edom's Humiliation and Destruction	Edom's Cruelty and Crimes	Edom and the Day of the Lord
VERSES 1-9	VERSES 10-14	VERSES 15-21
Portent	Prediction	Denunciation
Event	What will happen	Why it will happen
Content	"The arrogance of your heart has deceived you. . . . I will bring you down." (1:3-4)	"Because of violence to your brother Jacob" (1:10)
Theme	The coming judgment of Edom	
Key Verse	1:10	
Christ in Obadiah	God's judgment of Edom and deliverance of Israel prefigure Christ's salvation and end-times judgment.	

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HAGGAI

First Message:	Second, Third, and Fourth Messages:	
Rebuild God's temple Rebuke Reflection Divine discipline Repentant response <u>"I am with you"</u> CHAPTER 1	Encouragement and Hope <u>"Take courage!"</u> <u>"I will bless you!"</u> <u>"I have chosen you!"</u> CHAPTER 2	
<i>"First day of the sixth month" (1:1)</i>	<i>"Twenty-fourth day of the sixth month" (1:15)</i> <i>Almost a month of silence</i> <i>"Twenty-first day of the seventh month" (2:1)</i> <i>"Twenty-fourth day of the seventh month" (2:18)</i>	
Time	Twenty-three days	
Emphasis	Over two months	
Scope	Practical, negative, confronting	
Theme	Spiritual, positive, comforting	
Key Verses	Future glory of God's house	
Christ in Haggai	We must put God first in order to experience His blessings.	
Key Verses	1:4-5; 2:7-9	
Christ in Haggai	Christ's presence in this temple, which was further expanded and adorned by Herod, is "the latter glory . . . greater than the former" (2:9). Jesus is "our peace" (Ephesians 2:14). His death on the cross has made us at peace with God now, and His future rule in His glorious kingdom will establish worldwide peace (Haggai 2:9). The righteous leader Zerubbabel is also a type of Christ and part of Jesus's genealogy.	

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JOEL

	The Plague of Locusts The past plague The future invasion Historic Day of the Lord Imminent Day of the Lord CHAPTERS 1:1-2:11	The Call to Repentance "Return to Me" The character of God KEY: 2:13 The universal appeal CHAPTER 2:12-17	The Future of Judah One of the greatest promises of hope in all the Old Testament Concerning the Spirit of God Concerning the judgment of God Concerning the kingdom of God Ultimate Day of the Lord CHAPTER 2:18-27	The Future of Judah Concerning the Spirit of God Concerning the judgment of God Concerning the kingdom of God Ultimate Day of the Lord CHAPTERS 2:28-3:21
Emphasis	Desolation	Exhortation	Restoration	
Emotion	Mourning now		Rejoicing later	
Parallel Verse	"For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; / Weeping may last for the night, / But a shout of joy comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).			
Theme	Repent, for the day of the Lord is near.			
Key Verses	2:12-14, 18, 25-27			
Christ in Joel	The coming of the Holy Spirit, who applies Christ's redemption, is predicted in 2:28. Jesus Christ is the One who judges nations but who also restores His people.			

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ZECHARIAH

	Call to Repentance CHAPTER 1:1-6	Encouragement and Motivation Visions Horses and riders Horns and craftsmen Surveyor and measuring line Joshua (the priest) and Satan Lampstand and seven lights Flying scroll and warning Woman and a basket Chariots and judgment CHAPTERS 1:7-6:15	Questions Fasting Failure Future of Zion CHAPTERS 7-8	Encouragement and Hope CHAPTERS 9-14
Time	Written during the building of the temple		Written after completion of the temple	
Purpose	To motivate those working on the temple to continue in spite of their own crop failures and financial distress. Rather than rebuking or condemning, Zechariah inspired the people to work.		To give the workers hope that there was a better day, a far more glorious day yet to come. Vivid scenes of Messiah are included. He is revealed as coming, rejected, returning, and conquering.	
Theme	Build the temple; build your future			
Key Verses	4:6; 8:3; 9:9-10			
Christ in Zechariah	Zechariah is second only to Isaiah in its number of messianic passages. Among Zechariah's explicit references to Christ are the angel of the Lord (3:1-2); the righteous Branch (3:8; 6:12-13); the King-Priest (6:13); the cornerstone, tert peg, and bow of battle (10:4); the good shepherd who is sold for thirty pieces of silver (11:4-13); the pierced One (12:10); and the coming Judge and righteous King (14).			

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MALACHI

	Love CHAPTER 1:1-5	Rebuke Against the Priests Irreverence Disobedience Cynicism Hypocrisy Offense CHAPTERS 1:6-2:9	Against the People Intermarriage with pagans Indifference Robbing God / no tithes Blasphemy CHAPTERS 2:10-3:15	Hope CHAPTERS 3:16-4:6
Content	Theological	Historical		Prophetical
Direction	Looking up	Looking in		Looking ahead
Theme	God cites the priest and the people with failure to keep His covenant but offers the hope of the Messiah, the messenger of the covenant who will bring justice and salvation.			
Key Verse	3:1			
Christ in Malachi	Malachi anticipates the first and second advents of Christ, who will fulfill God's covenant with the Jews (3:1), judge sinners (3:2-5), and bring healing to those who fear the Lord (4:2).			

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