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

If we fail to listen to the voices from the past we are doomed to repeat their failures. There is great wisdom in learning from the people of the past in an attempt to avoid the pain of their mistakes. Contemporary Christians are blessed with the opportunity to learn from thousands of years of human history & struggle. The people of God have been living and striving to live their lives to the glory of God for millennia, and today we have the opportunity to learn from the failures and success’ of our predecessors. This semester we will be mining the ancient truths recorded in the Old Testament’s minor prophets. Today, the minor prophets are often left unsearched & therefore unlived. These ancient men have a very modern message for us to hear. Let’s dive into these books together and pray that the Lord would allow us to rediscover His timeless truths.

MINOR PROPHETS STATS
These books are not minor because of their content but rather the designation is given due to the fact that they are considerably shorter than the so called major prophets in the Old Testament. Scholars say that Obadiah was the first to be written over 2,850 years ago. These prophets wrote to different people in different circumstances over the course of 400 years. Here is a breakdown of the prophet and the approximate date the book was written.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prophet</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obadiah</td>
<td>845 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>835 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonah</td>
<td>755 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nahum</td>
<td>650 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zephaniah</td>
<td>630 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habakkuk</td>
<td>609 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amos</td>
<td>752 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haggai</td>
<td>520 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micah</td>
<td>735 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zechariah</td>
<td>480 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosea</td>
<td>725 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malachi</td>
<td>432 B.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MINOR PROPHETS MESSAGE
The messages of these twelve are as diverse as the prophets themselves. Some bore burdens about judgment and woe, while others proclaimed good news. Some spoke directly; while others reported strange visions. Some spoke to Israel, some to Judah, and a few even addressed non-Israelite nations.
# SUMMARY OF THE MINOR PROPHETS MESSAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOOK</th>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>KEY</th>
<th>KEY</th>
<th>MESSEIANIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hosea</td>
<td>God's love for</td>
<td>14:9</td>
<td>Return</td>
<td>Second Moses, David, Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>The day of Yahweh</td>
<td>2:13</td>
<td>Repentance</td>
<td>Teacher for Righteousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amos</td>
<td>Prepare to meet</td>
<td>5:24</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Occupant of the Tent of David</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obadiah</td>
<td>The kingdom shall</td>
<td>v. 21</td>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>Savior &amp; Judge par excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonah</td>
<td>Prejudice conquered</td>
<td>4:11</td>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>Resurrected Prophet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micah</td>
<td>The triumph of hope</td>
<td>6:8</td>
<td>Divine</td>
<td>Ruler from Bethlehem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nahum</td>
<td>The overthrow</td>
<td>1:15</td>
<td>Nineveh</td>
<td>Bringer of Good Tidings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habakkuk</td>
<td>Walking by faith</td>
<td>2:4b</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Conqueror of Satan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zephaniah</td>
<td>The day of</td>
<td>1:4</td>
<td>Remnant</td>
<td>Witness against the Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haggai</td>
<td>Courageous strength</td>
<td>1:8</td>
<td>Build</td>
<td>Desire of all Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zechariah</td>
<td>Present distress</td>
<td>4:6b</td>
<td>Visions</td>
<td>Enthroned Priest-King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malachi</td>
<td>Divine love offended</td>
<td>3:8</td>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>Sun of Righteousness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHAT’S IN A NAME? MINOR PROPHETS NAMES AND THEIR HEBREW MEANINGS**

- **Hosea**: Salvation, Deliverance
- **Joel**: Yahweh is God
- **Amos**: Burden Bearer
- **Obadiah**: Servant of Yahweh
- **Jonah**: Dove (see Gen. 8:8)
- **Micah**: He Who Is Like Yahweh
- **Nahum**: Comforter
- **Habakkuk**: Embrace
- **Zephaniah**: The Lord Has Hidden
- **Haggai**: Festive
- **Zechariah**: Yahweh Remembers
- **Malachi**: My Messenger

---


This book was written after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian armies. In it we read about angry soldiers as they wreck the walls, slay the people, and burn the city. But we see something else. We see a group of neighboring citizens—the Edomites—as they stand on the other side and encourage the Babylonians to ruin the city. “Raze it! Raze it!” they are calling. “Dash their little children against the stones and wipe out the Jews!” (Ps. 137:7–9) Who are these people who desire such terrible things to happen to their neighbors? They are brethren to the Jews. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, Jacob’s older brother (Gen. 25:21–26). Esau was outwardly a much better man than scheming Jacob, yet God chose Jacob and rejected Esau. Esau moved to the mountains in the south and established the Edomite kingdom, but they remained enemies. *(Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament)*

In this short book (the shortest in the Old Testament) we see a story where excessive pride turns into contempt and violence. It is in the nature of people to take pride in themselves & it is in the nature of God to bring low the proud and to lift up the humble.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Author:** Obadiah means “servant of Yahweh.” Practically nothing is known about this prophet. He was probably a native of Judah. He had tremendous faith to see the ultimate glory of God’s kingdom. The message rather than the man is the focus of this book.

**Setting:** 586 B.C. in Jerusalem

**Message:** God’s people have a glorious future, while those who are hostile to the kingdom of God are destined for eternal ruin.

**DAY ONE: READ OBADIAH**

Write a short summary of the book in your own words:

**Key Verse:**

3 The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty dwelling, who say in your heart, “Who will bring me down to the ground?” Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars,” from there I will bring you down, declares the LORD.
DAY TWO: INVESTIGATING OBADIAH

Look up the following Old Testament passages in order to learn more about the identity of Edom and its relationship with the people of Israel.

Genesis 25:21–28
2 Kings 8:16, 20–22

Describe the thoroughness of the destruction of Edom promised by the Lord through the vision of Obadiah? (Obad. 5–9)

Why did the Lord send a harsh message of judgment against Edom by the prophet Obadiah? (Obad. 10–14)

“On the day that you stood aloof, on the day that strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem...”
Obadiah 3

The Edomites are guilty of standing idle as their neighbors were being killed and robbed.

Read Jesus' words in Luke 10:30-37. How do these 2 stories correlate?

How can you practically engage in helping those in need?

How might pride keep you from doing this?
DAY THREE: BEHIND THE SCENES

FROM THE BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY:

Edom prided herself in her wealth (v. 6), her alliances with her neighbors (v. 7), her wisdom (v. 8), and her soldiers (v. 9). Edom’s fertile valleys had been developed through irrigation, and she had become a center in foreign trade routes.

V. 2. Edom prided herself in her great wealth (obtained by trading, looting, and by iron and copper mining in the region) and in her almost impregnable position geographically.

Yet God said He would cause her to be made small in contrast with her self-exaltation, and to be . . . despised.

Vv. 3-4. Her pride would be her undoing, for it would deceive her into thinking that no one could conquer her. “Pride” translates “to boil up, to be presumptuous.”

Contributing to this self-deception was the supposed security of Edom’s geographical location in the mountains of Seir. She trusted in the natural protection provided by the clefts of the rocks. Living in caves high (on the heights) above the ground level she felt totally safe from enemy attacks.

In response to Edom’s self-confident, arrogant question, Who can bring me down to the ground? . . . the LORD answered that He would bring them down! God, like an eagle, would swoop down (Jer. 49:22) on those who thought they were safe as eagles. Though Edom was almost impregnable to man, she was not inaccessible to God.

V. 7. Edom prided herself in the alliances she had with her neighboring countries. Perhaps they became her allies to gain favorable trade relations with her. But those allies, in whom Edom trusted, would become her enemies. Ironically Edom, deceived by her own pride (v. 3), would then be deceived by her allies! What an alarming strategy—not an attack by a known enemy, but an ambush by an ally. Those who eat your bread refers to friends or allies (cf. Ps. 41:9).

Another point of irony in Obadiah 7 is that Edom, known for her wise men (cf. v. 8; Jer. 49:7), would be totally ignorant of her allies’ deceptive scheme.

The downfall referred to here probably occurred in the late sixth or early fifth century B.C. when the Nabateans went to the Edomites who took them in for a banquet. Once welcomed inside Edomite territory, the Nabateans turned against their ally and killed the guards.

QUESTIONS

List at least 4 areas of pride found in the Edomites in verses 3 to 8.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

Which of these areas of pride do you most relate with? Why?
### DAY FOUR: LIVING THE TRUTH

What are the modern parallels between the issues that concerned the people of Obadiah’s day and issues that concern contemporary Christians?

### THIS WEEK

Have you ever secretly wished that someone close to you would fail? What do you think is the relationship between pride and the desire to see others fail?

Who close to you are you tempted to treat with disdain or unforgiveness as Edom treated Judah?

This week how can you realistically alter your attitude and your actions toward this person?

If you allow resentment and bitterness toward another person to grow unchecked, how can you expect your attitudes to “come around” and have a negative impact on your life?

When disaster strikes, understanding of God is at risk. Unexpected illness or death, national catastrophe, social disruption, personal loss ... it is the task of the prophet to stand up at such moments of catastrophe and clarify who God is and how he acts. If the prophet is good—that is, accurate and true—the disaster becomes a lever for prying people’s lives loose from their sins and setting them free for God. Joel is one of the good ones: He used a current event in Israel as a text to call his people to an immediate awareness that there wasn’t a day that went by that they weren’t dealing with God. We are always dealing with God.

The event that Joel used as his text was a terrible locust plague that was devastating the crops of Israel, creating an agricultural disaster of major proportions. He compared it to a massive military invasion. But any catastrophe would have served him as well. He projected it on the big screen and used it to focus the reality of God in the lives of his people. Then he expanded the focus to include everything and everyone everywhere—the whole world crowded into Decisions Valley for God’s verdict. This powerful picture has kept God’s people alert to eternal consequences of their decisions for many centuries.

“Taken from THE MESSAGE. Copyright © 2006. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group”

**Themes:**

1) Repentance
2) Sovereignty in Catastrophe
3) Grace

**Important Information**

**Author:**
We know very little about the prophet Joel. The text tells us he is the son of Pethuel but we know even less about Pethuel than we do of Joel.

**Setting:**
Joel is writing to the people of Israel between 800 and 400 B.C.

**Message:**
When the Lord comes, he will either be a furious lion seeking to devour or a gracious father lavishing blessing and grace upon those he loves. The Lord will wait patiently for his people decide which they would rather meet.

**Key Verse:**
Joel 2:13
“And rend your heart and not your garments.” Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in loving kindness And relenting of evil.” - NASB

**DAY ONE: READ JOEL**
Write a short summary of the book in your own words:
DAY TWO: THE LORD’S DAY

Read Joel 1, Joel 2:2-12, and Joel 2:30-31

Who is dictating every event described? (Joel 2:11)

What does this say about God?

What is the people’s sin? What have they failed to do? (Joel 2:27)

What does this say about God’s relationship to his people?

When Christ died, from what did he save us … man’s wrath or God’s?

Making it Personal

Is there ever calamity, destruction, or catastrophe that is outside of God’s control?

Do the events in today’s reading challenge your view of God in any way?

How do you think God can be loving and yet act this way?

Many people react to pain and calamity as attacks from Satan. What does this make you think about catastrophe and calamity in your own life?

Addressing the Misconception

Just because we face hardship and persecution does not mean that God is punishing us for our sin to recognize him as Lord. The apostle James encouraged us to view hardship as the testing of our faith. The author of Hebrews reminds us that the Father disciplines those he loves. And the Apostle Paul sought after the sufferings of Christ and viewed them as fellowship with his savior. So not every form of destruction should be viewed as warning in relation to sin. However, we should take from Joel that God is sovereign in every act, good or bad. And when we face hardship we should not always assume it an attack from the evil one. Maybe God is trying to get our attention!
DAY THREE: “OH, HOW HE LOVES A BROKEN HEART.”

Read the following from Joel:

Chapter 1: 8, 1:11, 1:13 –14
Chapter 2: 1, 2:12—13, 2:15-17

According to these verses, what does God wants from His people? What is He asking them to do?

Psalm 51:17

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.” NASB

2 Chronicles 7:14

“My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land” NASB

New Testament Parallels:

Joel is not the only place we find this calling …

Read the following verses from the New Testament and record any thoughts:

Matthew 3:2
Matthew 6: 9-15
I Timothy 1:15
II Corinthians 7:10

Where else do you find record of God’s people being called to repentance? … humility? … brokenness?

How about you?

How does your own posture, attitude, or spirit reflect these verses read today?

Just take a little time to think through the way you approach God and all that he has done for you. Also consider how you interact with others. Does your attitude communicate the message of Joel to others? Do you reflect the humble heart that is ever grateful for the rescue from drought and devastation?

Think … Ponder … Pray
Read the following and record any thoughts/observations:

Joel 2: 13—14

Joel 2: 18—29 (List at least 6 promises made)

Joel 3:18-21

Now take a few seconds to look back at the Lord’s day, studied on day 2…

With today’s verses in mind, does it seem as though there is much middle ground with God?

“*It makes all the difference in the world*”

Look up the definition for the following words:

Grace:

Mercy:

What is the difference between these two words?

_Ephesians 2:8_

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” - NASB
“That Jonah was an actual person in history is verified by 2 Kings 14:25, where we find his prophecy that Jeroboam II would expand his kingdom. This message certainly made him a popular preacher. But when God called Jonah to preach to the city of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, then the prophet rebelled. History tells us that the Assyrians were a cruel and heartless people who thought nothing of burying their enemies alive, skinning them alive, or impaling them on sharp poles under the hot sun. ‘If the city of Nineveh is going to be overthrown, then let it be overthrown,’ argued Jonah. ‘I would rather disobey God than see my enemies saved from judgment.’ In the four chapters of his book, Jonah traces his experiences and the lessons that he learned” (Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament).

Jonah is the story of God calling Jonah to go to Nineveh to urge the people to repentance. Instead he disobeys and flees to Tarshish. The four chapters of the Book follow him on his journey and show God’s lovingkindness and compassion not only to him, but to the great city of Nineveh.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Author:** Jonah, son of Amittai. His name means “Dove.”

**Setting:** 755 B.C. in Judah.

**Message:** “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). This verse explains the message of Jonah very well. God desires and delights in repentance.

**DAY ONE: READ JONAH**

Jonah is a short book—just 4 chapters. Read the whole book in one sitting and write a short summary in your own words:
DAY TWO: INVESTIGATING JONAH

Today we will focus on Jonah 1-2. Here we see God’s command to Jonah and Jonah’s response to God. Let the questions below help you make some observations.

The command:

What exactly did God command Jonah to do?

Why did He command this?

What do you learn about God from this one command?

The response:

What was Jonah’s response to God’s command?

Why did he respond this way? (For some background on the city of Nineveh (the capital city of Assyria), read 2 Kings 18:13-19:19.)

What were the results of Jonah’s disobedience?

“When God called Jonah to go to Nineveh the first time, Jonah ran in the other direction. Why? The reader assumes it was just fear, but chapter 4 reveals that there was also a lot of hostility in Jonah toward the Assyrians and Ninevites. I believe the reason he did not have pity on them was that he did not sufficiently realize that he was nothing but a sinner saved by sheer grace. So he ran away from God—and you know the rest of the story. He was cast into the deep and saved by God from drowning by being swallowed by a great fish. In the second chapter we see Jonah praying, and his prayer ends with the phrase ‘Salvation is of the Lord!’ (2:9). My teacher Ed Clowney used to say that this was the central verse of the Bible. It is an expression of the gospel. Salvation is from and of the Lord and no one else. Period.’” (The Gospel and the Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World, Tim Keller).
DAY THREE: INSIDE THE BIG FISH

It has been commonly believed that God caused Jonah to be swallowed by a great fish to punish him. In reality, God did this to deliver Jonah. Read Jonah’s prayer of Thanksgiving in Chapter 2 and make some observations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jonah’s Requests</th>
<th>God’s Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPLICATION

It was in the midst of Jonah’s disobedience that God delivered him. While Jonah deserved destruction, God brought salvation.

Think back to a time in your life when perhaps you were “drowning” because of disobedience. How did you experience the Lord’s gracious salvation? What was your response?
DAY FOUR: JONAH 3

Read Jonah 3 today. Compare the command, response, and result in this chapter to chapter 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
<th>Chapter 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God’s command</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonah’s response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPLICATION

Is there something that God has commanded you to do in the past that you have disobeyed? Is He graciously but firmly calling you to now obey? Pray very specifically about this today. Confess and claim the promise of 1 John 1:9.

Notice how Jonah’s obedience resulted in blessing for the Ninevites. How has your obedience resulted in blessing for others?
4:1. Jonah bluntly rejected and repudiated the goodness of God to the Ninevites. In that attitude he symbolized the nation Israel. Jonah’s self-interests were a reminder to Israel of her lack of concern for the ways and mercies of God. The word but points up the contrast between God’s compassion (3:10) and Jonah’s displeasure, and between God’s turning from His anger (3:9-10) and Jonah’s turning to anger.

4:2. Out of anger and disgust the prophet rebuked his Lord, saying in essence, "I know that You are forgiving and now look what has happened!" Jonah admitted that he fled toward Tarshish because he did not want the Ninevites to be saved from judgment. (He wanted to be delivered from calamity, 2:2, 7, but he did not want the Ninevites to be kept from disaster.) The Ninevites were more ready to accept God’s grace than Jonah was. Jonah, an object of God’s compassion, had no compassion for Nineveh’s people.

4:3. Jonah’s anguish over what God did led him to request that he might die (cf. Jonah 4:8; 1 Kings 19:4). Earlier he had prayed to live (Jonah 2:2). Perhaps now he was embarrassed that his threat was not carried out. Because God relented of His wrath and did not destroy the city, Jonah was so emotionally disappointed that he lost all reason for living. God was concerned about the city (4:11) but Jonah was not.

4:4-5. Though Jonah knew that God is slow to anger (v. 2) he still wanted the Lord to execute His wrath swiftly. Yet God, hesitant to be angry with even His prophet, sought to reason with him. God asked the sulking messenger whether his anger was justified (cf. v. 9). This question implied a negative response: Jonah had no right to be angry. A person should never angrily question what God does, even when it differs from what he expects or wants. Jonah was so distraught that he did not reply to God. Instead he left the city and built a crude shelter, perhaps from tree branches, and sat down (cf. the king’s sitting in the dust, 3:6) in its shade (cf. Elijah under a broom tree, 1 Kings 19:4).

4:6. God provided (cf. "provided" in 1:17; 4:7-8) a vine to give the prophet shade that his crude shelter (v. 5) could not provide. The God of the sea, who could provide a fish to swallow Jonah, is also the God of the land (cf. 1:9) and its vegetation. Here is evidence that God is compassionate (4:2)—even when His servants are upset and depressed.

4:7-8. Early the next day God provided (cf. "provided" in 1:17; 4:6) a worm that destroyed the plant that had brought joy to the prophet. Then the following day God provided a scorching east wind that left Jonah comfortless and faint. The prophet’s own shelter was not enough to protect him from the terribly hot wind from the east. Strikingly in chapter 1 God intervened by a storm and a huge fish; now He intervened with a lowly worm and a sultry wind. Again the prophet was so discomforted—first by Nineveh’s repentance and now by the loss of the shade from the vine—that he wanted to die (cf. 4:3).

4:9. God asked Jonah the same question He posed earlier. Do you have a right to be angry? (cf. v. 4) But here He added the words about the vine. God was wanting Jonah to see the contrast between His sparing Nineveh and His destroying the vine—the contrast between Jonah’s lack of concern for the spiritual welfare of the Ninevites and his concern for his own physical welfare. Both Jonah’s unconcern (for Nineveh) and concern (for himself) were selfish. Jonah replied that his anger over the withered plant was justified, and that he was so angry he wanted to die.

4:10-11. God wanted Jonah to see that he had no right to be angry over Nineveh or the vine because Jonah did not give life to or sustain either of them. Nor was he sovereign over them. He had no control over the plant’s growth or withering. The vine was quite temporal (it sprang up overnight and died overnight) and was of relatively little value. Yet Jonah grieved over it. Whereas Jonah had no part in making the plant grow, God had created the Ninevites. Jonah’s affections were distorted; he cared more for a vine than for human lives. He cared more for his personal comfort than for the spiritual destiny of thousands of people. What a picture of Israel in Jonah’s day.

QUESTIONS

Have you ever been angry with God because He did not do what you expected?

Take some time to confess your anger to God. Pray that He would give you a desire for His will above all else. Pray as Jesus prayed, "Not my will be done, but yours be done (Luke 22:42)."
LIKE OTHER PROPHETS, AMOS HAS A DUAL THEME OF CONDEMNATION AND CONSOLOATION, BUT THE PROPORTION OF THE JUDGMENT SECTION (1:1—10) RELATIVE TO THE COMFORT SECTION (9:11—15) IN AMOS IS GREATER THAN MOST. AMOS PARTICULARLY ADDRESSES THE SOCIAL INJUSTICE PRACTICED BY THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. HE REBUKES THEIR OPPRESSION OF POOR PEOPLE, THEIR GREED AND MATERIALISM, THEIR ArROGANCE AND HYPOCRISY AND THEIR INDIFFERENCE TO THE PLIGHT OF OTHERS. IN THE DAYS OF JEROBOAM II, ISRAEL ENJOYED A PROSPEROUS ECONOMY AND RELATIVE FREEDOM FROM FOREIGN OPPRESSION. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE PEOPLE HAD NO INTEREST IN HEARING A MESSAGE ABOUT COMING DOOM. AMOS'S WORDS, "PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD, O ISRAEL" (4:12) WERE MET WITH COMPLETE SCORN AND CALLOUSNESS. IN SPITE OF THIS, GOD STILL PRESENTED HIS PEOPLE WITH A GRACIOUS OFFER OF DELIVERANCE FROM IMPENDING JUDGMENT AND DISASTER.

"TAKEN FROM THE HOLY BIBLE NIV ®. COPYRIGHT © 1984 BY INTERNATIONAL BIBLE SOCIETY. USED BY PERMISSION OF ZONDERVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE. ALL RIGHTS RESERVE."

**DAY ONE: READ Amos 1-3**

Make note of Israel's sins (list as many as you can):

What is one of the central reasons for God's anger against these people? (see verses 2:10—11, 3:2)

In light of the introduction to Amos, do you think Amos's message would be received any differently today? Would Christ second coming make much difference in business?
DAY TWO: READ Amos 4-5:20

What is the most repeated phrase or theme in these two chapters?

List the different ways God tried to get the people’s attention. (Give at least 9)

What have the people repeatedly failed to do?

From these two passages, does it seem like God is asking for very much?

New Testament Parallel

Read Revelation 3:14-22

How does this relate to Amos 4—5?

What does all this mean to you?

Has there ever been time in your life when you treasured the created more than the creator?

“At the core, man’s problem is that he has loved the created thing more than he loves the Creator”

Matt Chandler
DAY THREE: Read Amos 5:21—7:9

Look at today’s text in consideration of worship

What is the message being communicated about worship?

How does Israel use her wealth in this section?

Were the people of Israel lacking in religious activities?

What is different about Amos’ heart in chapter 7 compared to Israel in chapter 6?

What does this reveal about the heart of God?

More on worship

What more do you see about God’s desire in worship/religion from the following text?

John 4:23

James 1:27 & James 2

Proverbs 3:1-9

How do these verses relate to Amos message to Israel?

Watch your step when you enter God’s house. Enter to learn. That’s far better than mindlessly offering a sacrifice, Doing more harm than good. (Ecclesiastes 5:1)
### DAY FOUR: Read Amos 7:10—Amos 9

#### Section 1) Amos 7:10—17

**What Observations can you make about Amos?**

**What is Amos’ point in these 7 verses?**

**Was his message well received? How did this affect his will to preach?**

---

#### Section 2) Amos 8—See also Luke 16:19-31

**What is the link between these two passages?**

**What do these two passages reveal about God’s relationship to the poor?**

---

#### Section 3) Amos 9: 1—10

**What is being communicated in this section?**

**How does this section relate to the rest of Amos?**

---

*“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!”*

(Matthew 23:37-38)

---

*“Seek Me that you may live.” Amos 5:4*
The name Hosea means “salvation.” He preached in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, during a period of national decline. When Hosea started his ministry, Jeroboam II was king, and it was a time of great prosperity. But the nation was rotting away inwardly and getting involved with foreign alliances instead of trusting God to lead and protect them.

Hosea’s message is to the nation of Israel, exposing their sins and warning them of coming judgment. There is also a message of hope for the future, as we shall see. But the unique thing about his message is that he had to live it himself before he could preach it to the people. The prophet had to experience deep agony in his own marriage because of the sins of his wife, but all of this was a divinely sent object lesson to him and his people.

THEMES:
1) God’s Undying Love
2) Spiritual Apathy
3) Repentance

KEY VERSE:
“And the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.”

IMPORTANT INFORMATION
Author: The name Hosea means “salvation.” His personal family tragedy has earned him the title “the man of the shattered romance.” His literary skills are recognized in the title “Israel’s poet laureate.”

Setting: Hosea’s ministry followed a golden age in the northern kingdom, with a period of great peace and prosperity. This prosperity led to moral decay, and Israel forsook God to worship idols. So God instructed Hosea to marry a prostitute, whose unfaithfulness to her husband would serve as an example of Israel’s unfaithfulness to God.

Message: Hosea explains God’s complaint against Israel and warns of the punishment that would come unless the people returned to the Lord and remained faithful to him. The book shows the depth of God’s love for his people, a love that tolerates no rivals.
DAY TWO: READ HOSEA Chapters 4-6:3

In these verses Hosea focuses on sin, judgment of sin, & gives a call for repentance.

What are the specific sins of the people that Hosea rebukes in:
4:1,2
4:6
4:12
4:14

“Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.”

HOSEA 6:1-3

After recalling the sins of the people, Hosea calls the nation to a heart of repentance before the Lord. In these verses what 3 things does Hosea call the people to do specifically?
1.
2.
3.

What five things does Hosea say that the Lord will do in response to their repentance?
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

The New Bible Dictionary defines repentance as, “as a call for man to return to his creaturely and covenant dependence on God.”

What is God calling you to turn away from in order to depend more fully on Himself?
In this section Hosea uses metaphors to describe the people.

(1) a morning cloud (6:4), here one minute, gone the next;
(2) a half baked cake (7:8), for their religion had not gotten deep into their lives, but was a sur-
face thing;
(3) gray hairs (7:9), losing their strength but ignorant of the change;
(4) a silly dove (7:11), unstable, flitting from one political ally to another;
(5) a deceitful bow (7:16) that you cannot depend on.

Which one [if any] of these metaphors would you say most describes your life right now?

“One of the greatest dangers facing contemporary believers is the tendency to define religion in terms of
formal acts of worship. This was the problem in Ephraim and Judah in the days of Hosea. The temples
were overflowing with worshipers. These worshipers, however, showed no inclination to implement
moral principles in their everyday lives. God did not want superficial religion.”

-James Smith “The Minor Prophets”

"Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your
unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers right-
eousness on you."  

HOSEA 10:14

Read up Galatians 6:7, 8

Sow - to plant seed on an area of land in order to grow crops.
Reap - to obtain something, especially as a consequence of previous effort or action.

What do you expect to ‘reap’ by your actions?

What does the phrase, “break up your unplowed ground” mean?

How does this verse summarize much of Hosea’s message? 
DAY FOUR: READ HOSEA Chapters 11-14

REVIEWING THE THEMES IN HOSEA

Review the following verses about major themes in Hosea.

Sin & Spiritual Apathy
2:5
4:12
5:7
6:7
9:1

God's Undying Love
2:19
4:1
6:6
10:12
12:6
14:2-4

How does God express His faithful love for the adulterous people?

How has God expressed His faithful love to you recently?

Write a summary statement for the book of Hosea.

THIS WEEK

Pray for forgiveness of spiritual apathy, or of anything that you have placed before the preeminent Lord.

Read John 3:16 remembering that the Lord so loved you.
Micah’s particular concern is with the social sins of exploitation and injustice. Two problems permeated the kingdoms of Israel and Judah: political corruption, greed and arrogance among religious leaders, and false prophets who were more interested in personal gain than in corporate goodness … Unlike other prophets, Micah is equally concerned with both Israel and Judah, therefore; much of his ministry occurred before the Assyrian captivity of Israel in 722 B.C. Old Testament prophets typically engage in both forth telling (exhorting people and applying God’s standards to the times) and foretelling (anticipating future judgment and blessing), but the proportion of foretelling in Micah is unusually high.

"Taken from the HOLY BIBLE NIV ®. Copyright © 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserve"
**DAY TWO: READ Chapter 3**

Who is Micah addressing in this chapter?

How are they using their seats of influence?

Can any of these verses be applied to our political leaders today in any way?

Take time to pray for our governments and world leaders!

---

**I Timothy 2: 1-2**

*First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, or kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.*

---

**False Prophets**:

Read 2 Peter 2 and 2 Timothy 4: 1-5

How do these two passages relate to Micah?

What is the irony in Micah 3: 11?

What distinguished Micah from the false prophets?

What are the words that Paul uses to encourage Timothy with?

In your own words, describe how you might identify a false prophet?

America is full of people today who listen to preachers who say what they want to hear rather than listen to truth. Pastors or “false prophets” exist today making money off that message. Take time to pray for the Church, Christ Bride, as a whole.
Day 3: Read Chapters 4 & 5

What is being described in the first 5 verses of Chapter 4?

What seems to be the general theme described in these four verses?

What is being said in verses 9—12?

What is unique about verses 9-12 in comparison to the rest of these two chapters.

Who is being spoken of in the first 5 verses of Chapter 5? (See Matthew 2: 5—6)

If verses 9—12 describe the current situation for God’s people, then why do you think Micah surrounds them with visions of the Lord’s day, the promised Messiah, and promises of power and peace?

Summarize these two chapters in your own words.

“calmer than the sky far away so blue land of living God grant your peace on earth we can feel you move and cannot stay the same the winds are blowing strong God of heaven come”

“breathe peace breathe your peace on us so we might breathe you deep breathe peace breathe your peace on us land of the living God”

“if we are in the way move us to the side God forgive our wrongs rest your hands on us all the world is yours let us not forget it was you who bore the cross God of comfort breathe”

Peace Lyrics
Artist(Band): Robbie Seay Band

Everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree: This is a proverbial expression that means prosperity and peace (1 Kings 4:25, 2 Kings 18:31). David Guzik’s Commentaries on the Bible
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY FOUR: Read Chapter 6 &amp; 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6: 1—7 Summarize these 7 verses in your own words:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does this reveal about man’s relationship to God?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Looking at chapter 7: 1—6, what does a life of sin seem to produce? |
| What does life have to offer the man who places his trust in God? (7: 8—20) |

| Read Galatians 5:16—26 |
| How would you relate these verse to Chapter 7 of Micah? |

| What is unique about Chapter 7 verses 7—12? |
| How would you describe Micah by looking only at these verses? |

| In relation to sin, do you ever feel like you are fighting a battle you cannot win? |
| What does Micah’s hope do for you? |
Historical Background
Nahum prophesied during the dying days of the great Assyrian empire. Assyria was a ruthless enemy that practiced brutality on men, women, and children. Their armies destroyed and looted; they buried their enemies alive and even skinned them alive; they impaled people on sharp poles and left them to burn in the sun.

Assyria was always the scourge of the nations; every nation feared her and tried to win her approval.

Under Ashurbanipal (669–633 B.C.) the empire had reached its zenith. Though Ashurbanipal was a king of outstanding administrative capabilities, the vast empire, composed as it was of heterogeneous peoples, was virtually impossible to govern.

After his death, Ashurbanipal’s two sons engaged in a disastrous civil war. At the same time, fierce mountain tribes were pressing into the empire from the north. Assyria’s ancient rivals to the east—the Medes and Babylonians—were joining in military alliance. Finally in 612 B.C., Nineveh was destroyed by the Medes and the Babylonians; and so complete was their conquest that the ruins of the city remained undiscovered until 1842.

It was concerning this future destruction of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, that Nahum wrote. He wrote this little book at a time when Assyria was at the very peak of her power. Nobody would have dreamed that mighty Nineveh would fall, but God knows the future and He gave His message to Nahum to deliver to the frightened people of Judah. Nahum was writing his message to give hope to Judah, to encourage them to trust God at an hour of great danger.

& Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament

IMPORTANT INFORMATION
Author: Nahum, little is known about him.
Date: Around 626 BC
Message: The immediate purpose of Nahum is to pronounce the doom that was about to fall on Nineveh. The ultimate purpose of the book is to set forth God’s vengeance and sovereign righteousness.

DAY ONE: READ Nahum
What are your initial thoughts about what Nahum wrote?
DAY TWO: READ NAHUM 1

In Nahum 1:2,3 the author uses words to describe God. Look up the definitions for the following words & record your thoughts on how each of these attributes can be rightly related to God:

Jealous

Avenging

Wrathful

Long-suffering

Powerful

QUESTIONS

How can you reconcile God’s goodness in 1:7 and His actions in 1:8?

Does God have the power or right to judge?

In 1:15 the word ‘peace’ translate the Hebrew noun Shalom meaning “to be complete, perfect, and full.” Thus shalom is much more than the absence of war and conflict; it is the wholeness that the entire human race seeks.

Nahum 1:15 is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Romans 10:15. Read Rom. 10:13-17. What is the good news that Paul is referring to?

Today we have the privilege to be messengers who carry the ultimate good news for humanity. To whom are you carrying the good news?
DAY THREE: READ NAHUM 2
Commentary from *The Minor Prophets* by James Smith & *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

2:1–2 Chapter 2 is a vivid picture of the invasion of the city and its ultimate fall. Assyria had emptied Israel in 721; now God was going to restore His people by punishing the enemy.

2:1 “He who scatters” is the coalition of Babylonians, Medes, and Scythians about to attack Nineveh. The Assyrians practiced a policy of deporting conquered peoples from their homelands and scattering them throughout their empire, thereby stripping them of identity and continuity. The tribes of the northern kingdom suffered this fate. But Assyria, the great scatterer, will be scattered by others.

2:2. The description of the attack is interrupted by a word about Jacob and Israel. The destruction of Nineveh makes it possible for God’s people to be taken out of their humbled, debased condition and to have their splendor (“excellence or majesty”) restored.

2:3 The Medes wore scarlet uniforms and used scarlet shields. The armies with their spears and lances looked like a forest of fir trees.

2:6 A flood caused Tigris river to rise and wash out the foundation of the walls

2:7 Huzzab in refers probably to the queen, being led away in great humiliation.

2:8 Like a above ground pool whit broken sides the people flee and the city is poured out.

2:11–13. Note the repeated reference to lions. The lion was the symbol of the Assyrian empire, as you can see from pictures in history or archaeology books. They built huge statues of lions with the heads of men. “Where are your lions now?” Nahum asks. “Where are your rulers, your champions?”

2:13 - Yahweh hurls a challenge formula at the Assyrian lion such as one champion might hurl at another before mortal combat: “Behold! I am against you!” The title “Yahweh of hosts” underscores the inexhaustible power of the Lord. The chariots of Assyria which struck such fear into the peoples of the ancient Near East would be burned with fire.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: CITY OF NINEVEH

Nineveh, representing the entire Assyrian Empire, was a magnificent city located on the eastern bank of the Tigris River in modern Iraq. Nineveh was one of the oldest cities of the world. The tyrant Nimrod built the place as part of the second stage of his empire building (Gen 10:11, 12). King Sennacherib spent twenty-five years enlarging, fortifying and beautifying the old city. Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire during its golden age. It was surrounded by a wall almost eight miles in circumference and could accommodate an estimated 300,000 people. About 623 B.C. Cyaxares, king of the Medes, attacked the great city. In the years that followed the Medes joined with the Babylonians in waging almost yearly assaults on the Assyrians. Finally in 612 B.C. the city was destroyed. Imagine how happy the people of Judah were when they heard: “Nineveh has fallen! The Assyrian empire is no more!” (cf. 1:15)

DAY FOUR: READ NAHUM 3

What were the sins of Nineveh for which God would destroy her? (Nah. 3:1–4)

How do you think the sins of Nineveh made her like a prostitute? (Nah. 3:4)

How was the destruction of Nineveh like the public humiliation of a prostitute? (Nah. 3:5–7)

What contemporary opponents of our faith seem to you to be too powerful to overcome in human strength?

How does the book of Nahum encourage you to deal with this opponent?

READ Ephesians 6:12-18

What does verse 12 remind us to keep in mind with regard to our “enemies”?

What does Ephesians 6:13–18 tell us we are to do as we overcome spiritual opposition around us?

v. 13
v. 14
v. 15
v. 16
v. 17
v. 18

After studying this book write a summary of the book of Nahum in your own words.
Zephaniah wrote during the reign of King Josiah. Josiah came to the throne at the age of eight, and at the age of sixteen he committed himself to the Lord. When he was twenty, he began a great reformation in the land, pulling down the idols and judging the false priests and prophets. He then began to rebuild the temple and led the nation in a celebration of the Passover. To all appearances, it was a time of religious concern and consecration. But Zephaniah saw deeper; he saw the hearts of the people, and he knew that their religious zeal was not sincere. The reforms were shallow; the people got rid of the idols in their homes, but not the idols in their hearts. The rulers of the land were still greedy and disobedient, and the city of Jerusalem was the source of all kinds of wickedness in the land. Even today, many believers lack discernment and think that every “religious movement” is a genuine work of the Lord. Sometimes mere outward reformation only prepares the way for a work of the devil (Matt. 12:43–45).

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Author:** Zephaniah was the great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah, one of Judah’s most famous rulers. He has royal blood in his veins, but more important, he has the message of God on his lips.

**Date:** between 630 and 627 BC

**Message:** This book is written to warn Israel & the nations of the coming wrath of God on those who choose to reject God. It also stands to warn future generations of the still future ‘Day of the Lord.’ Finally the book ends with good news for God’s people.

**DAY ONE: READ Zephaniah**

Write a short summary of the book in your own words:

**Key Verses:**

1:12 “At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are complacent, those who say in their hearts, ‘The LORD will not do good . . .’

3:17, 18 “The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach.”
DAY TWO: READ ZEPHANIAH 1:1-2:3

The Teacher’s Commentary says that the Hebrew words translated “judge” and “judgment” are derived from din and sapat. These synonyms imply all functions of government; executive and legislative as well as judicial. Thus the prophet’s affirmation that “God is Judge” suggests that He is the ultimate Ruler of the universe as well as its moral arbiter. Because God is in total control of this universe He can and will come to punish sin and, ultimately, to establish righteousness.

QUESTIONS

Read Zephaniah 1:12

What do you think makes spiritual complacency so deadly to true spiritual vitality?

Read Acts 20:9. Do you think that people in our churches are ‘asleep in church’ today? Why?

“Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.”

- Romans 13:11,12

QUESTIONS

Read Zephaniah 1:14-18

Describe the nature of the day of the Lord.
   Its timing (v. 14)

   Its characteristics (vv. 15, 16)

   Its effects (vv. 17, 18; see vv. 2, 3)

Read Zephaniah 2:1-3

What are the appropriate responses to the prospect of God’s wrath?
Zephaniah turns his attention to the surrounding nations in this section.

Record the sin and the retribution promised for each of the following:
Philistia (vv. 4–7)

Moab and Ammon (vv. 8–11)

Egypt is next on the list (v. 12)

Assyria and her capital city Nineveh (vv. 13–15)
Note: Nothing seemed more improbable than that Assyria, which had literally carried off ten northern tribes, would itself become a desolation. Walls 100 feet high encompassed Nineveh for sixty miles. The walls were so wide that three chariots abreast could ride on them. With its 1,500 watchtowers, Nineveh felt justified to boast, “there is none besides me” (v. 15).[12 Voices for Truth
Jack Hayford]

How is it fair of God to act this way towards these nations?

QUESTIONS

In 3:2 what specific sins of the people does the prophet take aim at?

In 3:3, 4 what are the specific sins of the leaders?
Officials -

Judges (rulers) -

Prophets -

Priests -

What does 3:5 say about God’s character?
DAY FOUR: READ ZEPHANIAH 3:8-20

THIS WEEK

Verses 9–13 give a picture of God creating worshippers from idolaters. Is God working on you in any of these particular areas?

- Creating a pure speech (v. 9)
- Creating a desire to give Him your offerings (v. 10)
- Creating humility in you (v. 11 & 12)
- Causing you to trust in God (v. 12)
- Encouraging you to be a truth teller (v. 13)

What is God telling you about that area of your life?

The theme of Zephaniah is consistent with that of all the prophets. If we delight in the Lord and obey Him, He delights in us and shares His best with us. If we sin, He will chasten us in love. If we turn to Him in repentance, He will forgive us and restore our joy and peace.

Are you delighting in and obeying the Lord? Is there any unconfessed sin that is keeping you from intimacy with God? If so take the time to turn back to Him and ask Him to forgive and restore you. As you do that know that, "The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

After studying this book write another summary of the book of Zephaniah in your own words.

How is this summary different than the one you wrote after your 1st reading of the book?
In 536, Ezra took about 50,000 Jews and returned to the Holy Land from captivity in Babylon. They rebuilt the altar and started the sacrifices again, and in 535 the foundation was laid for the temple. But there was considerable opposition and the work stopped. The people’s desire to return to their homeland had not translated into a desire to walk with God. As time passed, religious practices became meaningless routines, with little attention given to God’s Law. It was not until 520 that the people took up the work again; and in 515 the temple was finally completed. It was the work of four godly men that finally brought the task to completion: Zerubbabel, the governor; Joshua, the high priest; and Haggai and Zechariah, the prophets. See Ezra 5:1 and 6:14.

The purpose of Haggai’s ministry was to awaken the lazy people and encourage them in finishing God’s temple. It was easy to get the work started when they first arrived in the Holy Land because everyone was dedicated and enthusiastic. But after months of trial and opposition, the work lagged and finally stopped. In this little book we have four sermons from Haggai, and each one of them has a specific date. In each message, Haggai points out a particular sin that will keep us from accomplishing God’s will and finishing His work.


**DAY ONE: READ HAGGAI**

This week we will take a look at each of the sins addressed by Haggai. For today, read the whole book of Haggai in one sitting. Summarize the book in your own words.
DAY TWO: READ Haggai 1:1-15

What is the setting (where, when, what is going on?) of this chapter?

Who are the people involved?

Commentary:

It was on September 1, 520, that Haggai delivered this message. Sixteen years had passed since the laying of the foundation, and the temple lay unfinished. This message was delivered to the two leaders of the nation, Zerubbabel and Joshua, the civil ruler and the religious leader. Haggai does not waste any time; he gets right to the point of his message: “The people are making excuses and neglecting God’s house. But it is time to get to work and finish the house of God.”

He points out their selfishness: they had built their own houses, but they said it was not time to build God’s house. In other words, they were putting self ahead of the Lord. Some of the Jews even had “ceiled houses,” which would be luxuries in that day. This sin is with us today, putting our own desires ahead of the will of the Lord. How easy it is to make excuses for not doing God’s work! The weather is too bad to go visiting or to attend church, but not too bad for a hunting trip or a shopping spree. People will sit through a double header baseball game and never complain, yet they start to fidget if a church service runs five minutes overtime.

Haggai warns us that we really lose out when we put ourselves ahead of God. In 1:6 he tells us that our earnings vanish away and our possessions fail to last when God is left out. God held back the rain (v. 10), and for this reason the crops failed (v. 11). After all, the Jews knew God’s promise that He would bless their land if they honored Him (see Deut. 28), but they did not trust His Word, so they lost the blessing. Matthew 6:33 is a great promise to claim; so is Phil. 4:19.

The message was received with real conviction (vv. 12–15), and the leaders became stirred to do God’s will. “I am with you,” promised the Lord. “I will be glorified.” Note that the whole enterprise was a spiritual venture and not merely a work of the flesh. God’s people rose up and put the Lord first in their lives.

QUESTIONS

What does the Lord say to the people through the prophet Haggai?

How do they respond? What are actual words/phrases used by the prophet to describe the peoples’ response?

How do you relate?

There is Hope. Notice that it is the Lord who causes the peoples’ efforts to be futile when they serve themselves before God. Praise God that He loves us enough to reveal the idols in our lives and draw us back to Him. Spend some time confessing to the Lord an area or areas of your life that you have put before Him. Acknowledge Him as Lord over all and ask Him to help you surrender.
DAY THREE: READ Haggai 2:1-9

Commentary:
The people had been working about seven weeks when Haggai preached his second sermon on October 21, the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34). It was supposed to be a great day of joy and praise, but instead it was a day of discouragement and complaining. Why? Because the people were looking back instead of looking ahead. When they had laid the foundation sixteen years before, the older men had wept because they remembered the glory of Solomon’s temple (Ezra 3:12); and now some of the people were discouraged because the new temple lacked splendor and glory.

Of course, the plight of the people was due to their sins, but this was still no reason for looking back. In God’s work, we must look ahead in faith. “Be strong and fear not!” God said to the discouraged leaders. “I am going to shake this world and one day establish my kingdom.” See Heb. 12:26–29. God promises that the glory of the latter house (the temple during the millennial kingdom) will far exceed the glory of the former house (Solomon’s temple). “And there I will give peace.” The best is yet to come.


QUESTIONS

Read a description of Solomon’s Temple in 1 Kings 6. What is the promise and/or warning in 1 Kings 6:12 and 1 Kings 9?

The Temple represents “relationship” and “kingdom” (the glory of God). Read Isaiah 9:6-7. What promise does God make about His Kingdom?

What was God’s encouragement to the people in Haggai 2:4? How then can we ultimately take courage to look ahead in faith?

“I think anybody who has ever undertaken a work for the cause of Christ has felt this kind of discouragement: the sense that you work and work and the product seems so paltry. You pour yourself into a thing week after week and month after month and the fruit is so minimal. Then you look back in history or across town and see the grand achievement of others, and your temple seems so trivial. And you get discouraged and are tempted to quit and put away your aspirations and drop your dreams and put your feet up in front of the television and coast. Who wants to devote his life to a second-rate temple?” John Piper: Sermon on Haggai
DAY FOUR: READ Haggai 2:10-23

Commentary:
Zerubbabel was an ancestor of Jesus Christ; his name is listed in the genealogies (see Matt. 1:12 and Luke 3:27). Zerubbabel is an OT type or illustration of Christ. Here Christ is seen as God’s chosen signet, His precious seal. A signet speaks of authority and honor. God gave Zerubbabel authority to finish the temple; God gave His Son authority to save the lost and build His temple, the church (John 17:1–3).


QUESTIONS

Read Zechariah 3 in connection with this message; Zechariah had preached his message in the eighth month of the same year (Zech. 1:1), just one month before Hag. 2:10–19. God was able to cleanse the people of their sins, if only they would repent.

Look at Haggai 2:10-17. Why did God cause the peoples’ work to be futile? What did He want from them?

Why must we confess our sins? Take a moment & confess to the Lord.

How can we guard against making God a genie in a bottle? In other words, sometimes we fall into thinking, “If I do ____________, then God you have to do ____________.”

SUMMARY AND CLOSING THOUGHTS

Beware of these sins that hinder the work of the Lord:
1. putting self ahead of God;
2. looking back instead of ahead;
3. unconfessed sin;
4. unbelief.

But notice the wonderful promises God gives us:
1. “I am with you” (1:13);
2. “Fear not” (2:5);
3. “I will bless you” (2:19);
4. “I have chosen you” (2:23).

Claim the promise of Phil. 1:6 and rise up and do the work of the Lord!

Pray. Maybe you aren’t sure what work God has called you to do. Spend some time asking Him to show you what He has for you and praise Him for His promise to be with you.
Young Exiled Prophet: Take heart for you are God’s people!

Zechariah

Theme and Purpose:

Chapters 1-8 record the visions and exhortations God gave to Zechariah in Jerusalem. One purpose of this portion of the book, dated from November of 520 B.C. to December of 518 B.C. was to encourage the people to complete the new central sanctuary. Another purpose was to help them realize that this new temple was not simply a building, but a key to their spiritual identity. The Messiah would appear in this very temple when he came to bring salvation to his people.

Zechariah evidently received the two oracles of chapters 9—14 a few decades after the temple was completed in 516 B.C.; they are directly concerned with the coming Messiah and Israel’s restoration after the time of the Gentiles. These oracles were meant to comfort and reassure the remnant that despite the uncertainty and hardship of their lives, the Lord had regathered them for a purpose and promised a glorious future for them in the Messianic Kingdom.

Zechariah has been called “the major minor prophet” because its 14 chapters make it the longest of the minor prophets. In addition, this book has more Messianic prophecies than any other Old Testament book except Isaiah.

Important Information

Author: Zechariah means “God Remembers.” Zechariah’s family were priests, but priests could do their work only in Jerusalem, and he was born in Babylon. As a boy he joined the first wave of exiles who returned to rebuild Jerusalem.

Setting: 520—480 B.C.

Message: Zechariah’s visions provided images of a sovereign God that worked their way into the lives of the people, countering the long ordeal of debasement and ridicule. The messages forged a fresh vocabulary that gave energy and credibility to the long term purposes of God being worked out in their lives. – Eugene Peterson

THE MESSAGE

DAY ONE: READ ZECHARIAH 1—6

List three main themes mentioned in these 6 chapters (include the verses that make you think this):

Does any of the language remind you of words spoken about Jesus? List as many verses you can that make you think of Jesus.
DAY TWO: READ ZECHARIAH 7-8

Looking Specifically at chapter 7:

What is the main point of this Chapter?

Read John 10:10-11 and Mark 12:28—34. How does these verses relate to Zechariah 7?

Has there been a time when you knew you were trading what you knew to be good for what “appeared” to be good? If so please write it down.

"Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:18)

“And the Lord Almighty said”

Looking Specifically at chapter 8:

In chapter 8, the phrase “The Lord Almighty” is repeated several times. Look at each time it is mentioned and write out what follows.

What do you think God is saying in this chapter?
Read Chapter 9 with Matthew Henry’s words in mind!

Read Ephesians 6:10—20 and record your thoughts.

But his kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. It shall not be advanced by outward force or carnal weapons. His gospel shall be preached to the world, and be received among the heathen.
- Matthew Henry

How does this make you think differently about today? Does it make any difference at all?

Spiritual blessings had been promised under figurative allusions to earthly plenty. Seasonable rain is a great mercy, which we may ask of God when there is most need of it, and we may look for it to come. We must in our prayers ask for mercies in their proper time. The Lord would make bright clouds, and give showers of rain. This may be an exhortation to seek the influences of the Holy Spirit, in faith and by prayer, through which the blessings held forth in the promises are obtained and enjoyed.—Matthew Henry

Now Read Chapter 10 with these words in mind.

Often we pray for blessing in the physical, be it test grades, financial provision, significant others, etc; but have you labored in prayer that God might strengthen your spirit?

Have you earnestly begged for more of his spirit?

Have you asked for the joy of children in your heart and not just temporary pleasures?

Take a little time to write out your prayers today with a new focus.
Ruler, King, and Conqueror

The phrase “On that day” is repeated over and again in these chapters. Summarize “that day” in your own words.

What will that day look like for God’s people?

Knowing that Christ is your king and that he is seated at the right hand of the Father, what does this section mean to you?

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39)

What’s so different about Zechariah?

After reading all of Zechariah it may seem that this minor prophet is a little different than the rest. List some of the unique contributions that Zechariah offers in comparison to the others we have already studied.
Historical Perspective
The postexilic period of Biblical history (586–400 B.C.) was one of the most important periods in world history. This was an era of religious ferment. Zoroaster, the founder of a religion which still has adherents in the East, lived during this period. Laocius (Lao-tse, “the Old One”), the founder of Taoism, and Confucius (K’ung-fu-tse) flourished in China in this same period. Gautama Buddha was born in India about 550 B.C.. The Upanishads, the sacred writings of Hinduism, were written about 500 B.C.

Great thinkers such as Socrates (469–399 B.C.) and Plato (427–347 B.C.) were on the scene at this time.

Spiritually the Jews of the fifth century had lost the joy of their salvation and their zeal for the Lord. The priesthood was degenerate. The people would bring faulty sacrifices, and the priests would approve them for presentation before God. Religious apathy and skepticism were widespread. Tithes were neglected. Divorce was common. Yet the people and priests refused to admit that anything was wrong. Into this environment Malachi marched. With these hypocrites and apostates he engaged in public debate. When he was finished he had laid bare the rotten foundation upon which their relationship to God rested.


Malachi called the people to repentance with respect to:
- the priesthood, which had become corrupt;
- worship, which had become routine;
- divorce, which was widespread;
- social justice, which was being ignored;
- tithing, which was neglected.

**DAY ONE: READ Malachi**

What are your initial thoughts about what Malachi wrote?
DAY TWO: READ MALACHI 1:1-2:9

“I have loved you,” says the LORD. But you say, “How have you loved us?”

Read the following verses and record your thoughts on the love of God
Romans 8:35-39

Ephesians 3:17-19

John 3:14-17

QUESTIONS

Not surprisingly, the exiles who had returned to Judah and Jerusalem and lost a sense of God’s love for them were unable to muster much love for Him in return. This showed in the way they kept up a superficial religiosity that insulted God.

What was the general charge of the Lord against His priests who set the spiritual tone for the whole people? (Mal. 1:6)

What situations would be preferable to the mediocre worship offered by the priests? (Mal. 1:10, 11)

What were the specifics of the way the priests defiled the sacrifices offered to the Lord, and why did this bother Him? (Mal. 1:12–14)

What would be the consequences for the priests of their indifferent attitude toward the worship of the Lord? (Mal. 2:1–4a)

What was the ideal the priests were to commit themselves to? (Mal. 2:4b–6)

DAY THREE: READ MALACHI 2:10 - 16

What sin is rebuked in 2:10-12?

Commentary from James E. Smith, *The Minor Prophets*

Intermarriage defiled “the covenant of our fathers.” The practice was a menace to the distinctive faith which was the basis of God’s covenant with Israel as well as the national existence. God had often warned against marrying the daughters of unbelievers. The men of Israel were guilty of the sin of intermarriage with unbelievers. “Judah…has married the daughter of a strange god,” i.e., a woman who adhered to a foreign deity. Such marriages had always been condemned because of the danger of seduction into idolatry. The principle of holiness—separation from the world—had thus been violated (2:11b).

Why does God not accept the offerings of the people according to 2:13-17?

Look up the following verses on divorce and record your thoughts:

Matthew 5:31, 32

Matthew 19:1-12

1 Corinthians 7:8-15

READ MALACHI 3:6-15

Define the term *tithe.*

Why does God consider a tithe so important?

Are you offering God your ‘tithe?’ If not, why not? Will you commit to offering God a tithe?

Mediocre people don’t participate in the supernatural aspects of the spiritual life. Too much risk is involved. They tend to become cynical about whether God actually intervenes in anyone’s life since they seldom observe Him in their own.

How did spiritual cynicism express itself in the lives of the returned exiles in Jerusalem? (Mal. 3:13–15)
DAY FOUR: READ MALACHI 3:1-5 & 4:1-6

Here Malachi speaks of the 2nd Coming of the Messiah. Describe the activity of the Messiah at His Second Advent. (Mal. 3:2–5)

His goal (vv. 2)
His effect on the priests (v. 3)
His effect on the people (v. 4)
His effect on sinners (v. 5)

On the day of the Lord, what will be the fates of the wicked and the righteous?
The wicked (Mal. 4:1)
The righteous (Mal. 4:2)

Revelation 22:12, 13
“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

Are you living as if Christ’s return is a reality?
If not, what needs to change in your life?

After studying this book write a summary of the book of Malachi in your own words.
Transfer your summary from each book to this to create a one page summary of the minor prophets.

Obadiah

Joel

Jonah

Amos

Hosea

Micah

Nahum

Zephaniah

Habakkuk

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi