

# *The Minor Prophets*

The Minor Prophets are a collection of the writings of 12 prophets from the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The main difference between them and the 4 Major Prophets was the length of their writings. The Major Prophets wrote longer books and had more significant ministries, while the Minor Prophets wrote shorter books.

## 1. HOSEA- 'Salvation'

**MINISTRY:** To the backslidden northern kingdom of Israel (which was often called 'Ephraim,' from the name of the largest tribe).

**TIME:** Hosea prophesied for about 40 years, during the rule of the last 7 kings of Israel before the nation was destroyed (about 750 B.C. to 710 B.C.).

During the first of these kings, Jeroboam II, Israel was a prosperous kingdom, but under the last 6 kings the nation became weak and very corrupt. (These 6 kings had short reigns, as 5 were murdered & one taken as a prisoner to Assyria.) Hosea prophesied God's last warnings to Israel, just as Jeremiah gave Judah their last warnings.

**THEME:** A holy God will judge sin, but His love and forgiveness never fail.

**OVERVIEW:** Hosea's personal relationship with his wife is prophetic of the theme of his ministry. His wife, Gomer, is unfaithful, turns to harlotry, and finally becomes a slave, 1:2-3, 2:2, 3:2. Hosea forgives Gomer, redeems her from slavery, and restores her to be his wife, 3:1-3.

In the same way, Israel was unfaithful to God, committing spiritual harlotry with many idols and gods, 2:13, 4:12. As a result, God would judge them with punishments, 2:11-12, 4:6, 8:3, 11:1-7. These judgments are to bring repentance and cleansing, 2:5-8, 3:3-5, 6:1-3, 14:1-8.

## 2. JOEL- 'The Lord is God'

**MINISTRY:** Joel prophesied warnings to the kingdom of Judah, which were also prophetic of judgment & revival in the Last Days.

**TIME:** Joel probably prophesied about 835 B.C. around the same time as Amos and Elisha.

**THEME:** Judgment is coming; repent so that God can also send restoration and revival!

**OVERVIEW:** Joel warned that plagues of locusts would come, as destructive as an army, 1:4-7, 2:1-11. Therefore God's people needed to pray and repent, 2:12-17. As a result God will bring restoration (2:23-27) and revival, 2:28-32. This is also prophetic of what the Lord will do in the Last Days, Acts 2:16-21, Mt.24:29-30, & Joel chapter 3.

## 3. AMOS- 'Burden,' or 'Burden-Bearer'

**MINISTRY:** Amos was a poor farmer from Judah (1:1 & 7:14), called by God to become a prophet (7:15), who traveled north into Israel to prophesy at the national religious center of Bethel, 7:10-13.

**THEME:** Judgment is coming to the nations, and especially to Israel. However, there will be a restoration for Israel.

**TIME:** Amos prophesied during a time of national prosperity for Israel (2 Kg.14:23-28) about 755 B.C. This was just after Elisha, Obadiah, and Jonah, and before Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah. Israel's economic prosperity and military strength only increased the materialism, immorality, and injustice in the land. The people and priests laughed at the message of coming doom, but because they did not repent, the nation was destroyed within 40 years.

**OVERVIEW:** Amos prophesied of the coming judgments of God upon 8 nations (chapters 1-2), rebuking Israel last, 2:6-8 & 13-16. Then he preached 3 sermons (chapters 3-6) and gave 5 visions of judgment, chapters 7 to 9:10. Amos ended his prophecies with Israel's restoration, 9:11-15.

#### 4. OBADIAH- 'Servant of the Lord'

**MINISTRY:** Obadiah was a prophet of Judah. He wrote the shortest book in the Old Testament, but it is a powerful message of judgment.

**THEME:** the nation of Edom was going to be totally destroyed. This happened by 70 A.D.

**TIME:** Probably between 840 to 825 B.C.

**OVERVIEW:** The Lord will judge Edom, the descendants of Esau, vs.1-9. This is because they offered no brotherly help or compassion to Judah, the descendants of Jacob, on their day of judgment, vs. 10-14. But Judah will be restored and shall possess many lands, including Edom, vs.17-21.

#### 5. JONAH- 'Dove'

**MINISTRY:** Jonah was a prophet of the kingdom of Israel, (2 Kg.14:25). God sent him as a missionary to preach repentance to Nineveh.

**THEME:** God's love & mercy are extended to all people, He forgives all who repent- even prophets & nations!

**TIME:** Between 773-755B.C.

**OVERVIEW:** Jonah was called by God to go to Nineveh, the capitol of the Assyrian empire, to prophesy judgment and to preach repentance, 1:1-2. Jonah disobeyed and went towards Tarshish or Spain, 1:3. God brought calamities to Jonah (the storm & great fish) to encourage Jonah to obey, 1:4-2:10. When Jonah obeyed, Nineveh repented and God forgave them, chapter 3. This made Jonah angry because he did not want the Assyrians, the cruel invaders of Israel, to repent and be forgiven, 4:1-3. The Lord again ordained circumstances to try to gently teach Jonah to have pity & mercy, 4:4-11.

**FACTS:** Nineveh's repentance did not last, so God destroyed the city 150 years later. In the 1700s, twice there were Englishmen in the days of whale hunting that were swallowed by fish, who were rescued one and two days later.

#### 6. MICAH- 'Who is like the Lord?'

**MINISTRY:** Micah was a prophet of Judah, from a farming area 40 km. SW of Jerusalem. He prophesied to both of the divided kingdoms of Judah & Israel.

**THEME:** God will judge both of the divided kingdoms, but the Messiah will come with restoration.

**TIME:** Micah prophesied about 735 to 710 B.C while Hosea prophesied in Israel and Isaiah in Jerusalem.

**OVERVIEW:** Chapters 1-3 predict judgment upon Israel and Judah. Chapter 4 & 5 predict the millennial kingdom of Christ (4:1-8), the captivity & return of Judah from Babylon (4:10), the birth of Christ (5:2), and the exaltation of God's people, 5:5-15. In Chapters 6-7 God pleads for repentance and offers His help.

#### 7. NAHUM- 'Comfort, Consolation'

**MINISTRY:** Nahum prophesied about the nation of Assyria. His words were a comfort to the Jews.

**THEME:** Assyria was going to be destroyed by God.

**TIME:** After Nineveh's repentance under Jonah's ministry, they returned to great evils within about 40 years, destroying Israel in 722 B.C. Up to a century later Nahum prophesied the destruction of Nineveh, which happened in 612 B.C.

**OVERVIEW:** God is majestic & mighty, chapter 1. He will judge and destroy Nineveh, chapters 2-3.

#### 8. HABAKKUK- One who Embraces'

**MINISTRY:** Habakkuk was a professional prophet of Judah.

**THEME:** God is just in His judgments; believers must live by faith & trust Him.

**TIME:** Probably written about 607 B.C. shortly before Judah was invaded by Babylon.

**OVERVIEW:** Habakkuk sighs (chap.1), sees (chap.2), and sings (chap.3). In Chapter one he sighs because God is going to judge the sins of Judah by the hands of the more evil nation of Babylon. In chapter two, Habakkuk sees that the just must live by faith, 2:1-4. Chapter three is a song about God's power and how we should rejoice & trust Him, even during judgment.

## 9. ZEPHANIAH- 'The Lord Hides' (He encouraged the people to be hidden from God's anger, 2:3)

**MINISTRY:** Zephaniah was of royal descent (1:1) and lived in Jerusalem.

**THEME:** God will judge the nations (prepare for judgment!) but the Jews would be restored.

**TIME:** Zephaniah grew up during the evil reigns of Manasseh and Amon, but he prophesied around 630 to 625 B.C. during the time of the good king, Josiah, 1:1. His prophecies of judgment probably helped prepare Judah for the revival under Josiah.

**OVERVIEW:** God will judge all the nations, 1:2-3 & 3:8. This includes Judah (1:4-2:3), Philistia (2:4-7), Moab & Ammon (2:8-11), Ethiopia (2:12), Assyria (2:13-15), and Jerusalem (3:1-7). However, the Jews will be restored, 3:9-20.

## 10. HAGGAI- 'Festive'

**MINISTRY:** Haggai was one of the Jews who returned from Babylon under Zerubbabel. He prophesied to the leaders and people and encouraged them to finish rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem.

**THEME:** Put God first and he will restore & revive.

**TIME:** Haggai prophesied on three days in 520 B.C.

**OVERVIEW:** Haggai's prophecies on the first day (chapter 1) stirred up the leaders & people to continue to rebuild God's house. The 2<sup>nd</sup> prophecy (2:1-9) was given about 1 month after they had started to rebuild, to encourage them to keep rebuilding because God had glorious future plans for the temple (prophetic of the last days church & 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ). The prophecies on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day first said (in 2:10-19) that the Lord would turn their financial curses into blessing because of their new obedience, and then said (in 2:20-23) that God would judge the nations but would exalt Zerubbabel (prophetic of the coming Messiah)

## 11. ZECHARIAH- 'The Lord Remembers'

**MINISTRY:** Zechariah was a priest and prophet to the Jews after they returned from Babylonian captivity, and worked together with Haggai to help stir up the people to rebuild the temple, Ez.6:14-15.

**THEME:** The Lord remembers His people, and has a wonderful future plan for them.

**TIME:** Chapters 1-8 were written before the completion of the Temple in 516 B.C. while chapters 9-14 were probably written about 40 years later.

**OVERVIEW:** Chapters 1-6 contain 8 visions that encouraged the rebuilding of the temple. Chapters 7 & 8 contain 4 messages to rebuke and encourage the people. Chapters 9-14 consist of 2 burdens. The first burden (chapters 9-11) concerns Jewish history up to the 1<sup>st</sup> Coming of Christ. Alexander the Great would come and conquer Israel's neighbors, but will spare Jerusalem (9:1-8) which will be preserved for her King (9:9-10). Israel would later successfully revolt against Greece (9:11-17) and be regathered from the nations 10:1-11:3. Israel would reject her Messiah and be led astray by false shepherds, 11:4-17. The second burden of Zechariah (in chapters 12-14) concerns the Second Coming and millennial reign of Christ. The Lord will save Jerusalem & Israel (chapter 12), cleanse His people (chapter 13), and the Messiah will come in power to judge the nations and rule the world, chapter 14.

**MESSIANIC PROPHECIES:** The Branch (6:12), Christ's entry into Jerusalem (9:9), Christ's betrayal (11:13), the crucifixion (13:6-7), the Second Coming (14:3-5), & the millennial reign of Christ: 14:9, 11, 16-21.

## 12. MALACHI- 'My Messenger'

**MINISTRY:** Malachi was the last prophet of the Old Testament, who stirred up the lukewarm people of God and told them that a future 'messenger' (Elijah, or John the Baptist) would prepare the way for the Messiah.

**THEME:** Prepare for the Messiah, for He will judge His people for their sins and will bless the faithful.

**TIME:** Malachi prophesied to the restored Jewish nation (which had returned from Babylon) about 80 years after the temple had been rebuilt, about 435 B.C. This was during the time of the Persian Empire, around when Nehemiah was the Jewish governor. Following this, there were more than 400 years of prophetic silence until John the Baptist.

**OVERVIEW:** Malachi rebuked the lukewarm & sinful people of God in chapters 1, 2, and 3:6-15. Then he prophesied about the coming of Christ in chapters 3:1-5 and 4:1-6.