Week 13: Malachi

Objective:

- Polluted Offerings to God
- Corrupt Priests
- The Coming Messenger
- Do Not Rob God
- The Great Day of God

Resources:

- Fr Tadros Y Malaty Commentary
- Catena Bible Commentary
- Fr Dawoud Lamie Bible study (Arabic)
- Minor Prophets SUSCOPTS

Activity for every week: Can you recite the 12 minor prophets?

Reading:

- Malachi 1
- Malachi 2:10-17
- Malachi 3
- Malachi 4

Key verse(s):

"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me.” Malachi 3:1

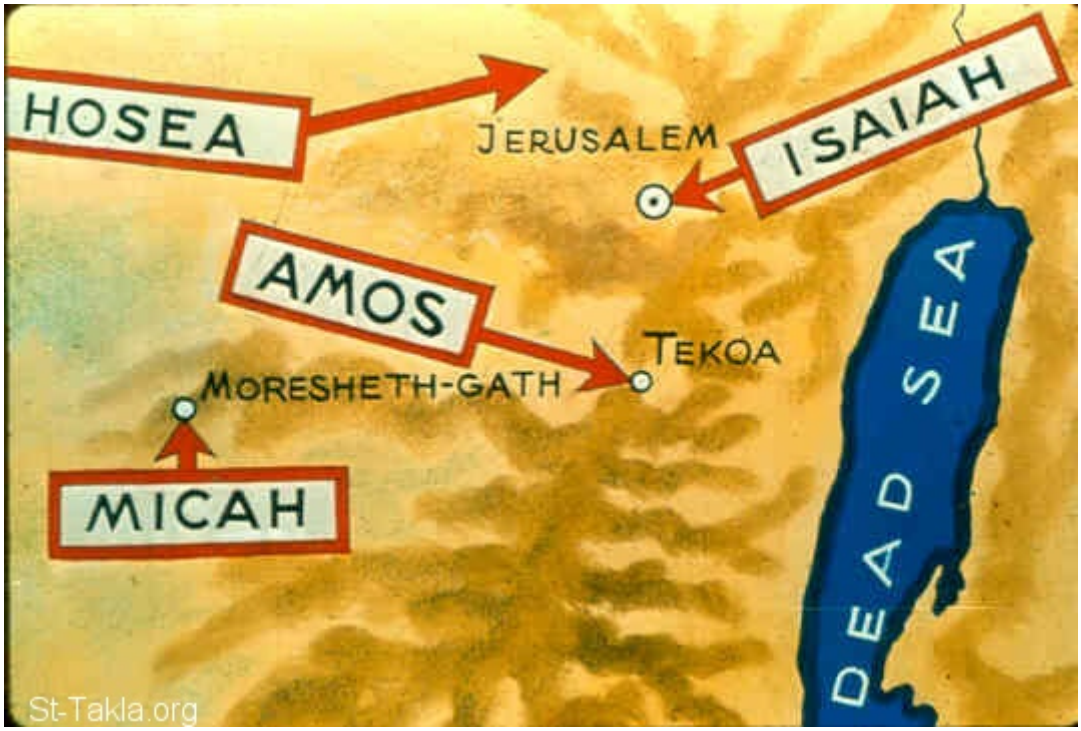
NOTE TO SERVANT:

- Please plan to ask and review these questions every week:
  - Who are the minor prophets? Can you recite them?
  - The theme for last week's minor prophet
  - Highlight Messianic prophecy

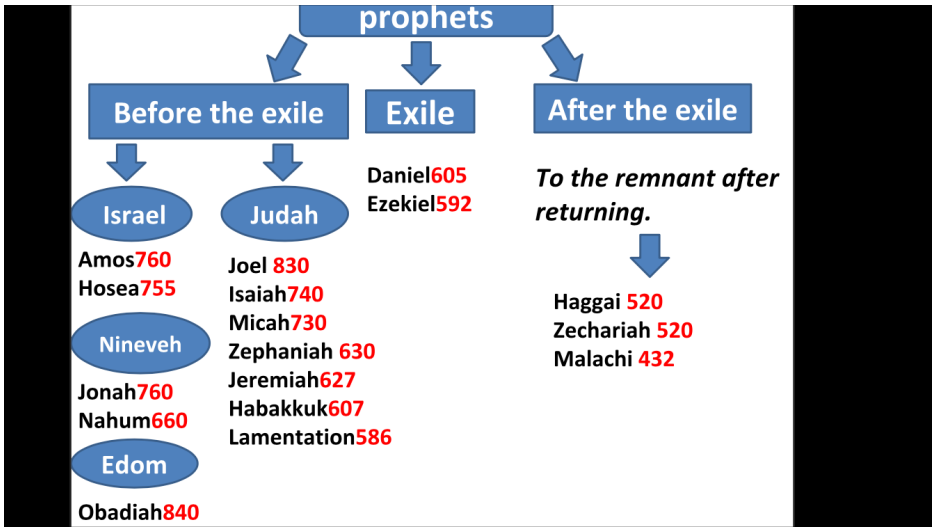
Minor Prophets introduction:

- The Major and Minor Prophet division of the Holy Bible does not denote the importance or rank of the writing prophets, but the length of the Holy Books which bear their prophecies.

    - Ex: Jonah 4 chapters - Isaiah 66 chapters
- There are 12 minor prophets and 4 major prophets (5 books including Lamentations)
- In the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible), all these books were listed under "prophets". In the Septuagint and Vulgate translations, this classification of major and minor was mentioned.
- The prophet in the OT was someone who passed God's message to the people. A prophet in the NT is also someone who passes God's message or news (God's love and salvation for all mankind).
- In the OT, there were many prophets (Moses, David, Elijah, Elisha, etc.), but when we refer to the "Prophets", we refer to the ones who recorded their prophecy.
- All prophecies had one goal: Repentance!
- Recorded prophecies were split into three groups: Before, during, and after the exile.
    - Before: Repent so God doesn't bring the exile
    - During: Repent so God can end the exile and take us back to our land
    - After: Repent because the Messiah is coming
- The books of the prophets are rich with Messianic prophecies. Our Lord fulfilled all.
- The meaning of the names of the prophets is usually the message of their writings.
- The prophetic books always start with a strong tough message and then end with a joyful promising message.
- All books have different themes. All books have the same message (repentance).
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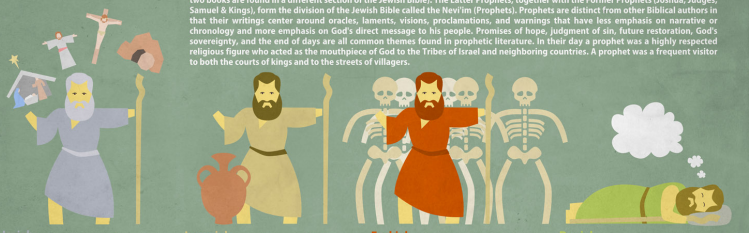


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prophets
Before the exile
Exile
After the exile
Israel
Judah
Amos760
Hosea755
Nineveh
Jonah760
Nahum660
Edom
Obadiah840
Joel 830
Isaiah740
Micah730
Zephaniah 630
Jeremiah627
Habakkuk607
Lamentation586
Daniel605
Ezekiel592
To the remnant after returning.
Haggai 520
Zechariah 520
Malachi 432

Introducing THE MAJOR & minor PROPHETS

The Major and Minor Prophets is a collection of books within the Christian Old Testament compiled from the writings of notable ancient Hebrew authors known as prophets. This section of the Christian Bible follows the section of the Jewish Bible known as the Latter Prophets which features a nearly identical list of books with the exception of Daniel and Lamentations (these two books are found in a different section of the Jewish Bible). The Latter Prophets, together with the Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel & Kings), form the division of the Jewish Bible called the Nevi'im (Prophets). Prophets are distinct from other Biblical authors in that their writings center around oracles, laments, visions, proclamations, and warnings that have less emphasis on narrative or chronology and more emphasis on God's direct message to his people. Promises of hope, judgment of sin, future restoration, God's sovereignty, and the end of days are all common themes found in prophetic literature. In their day a prophet was a highly respected religious figure who acted as the mouthpiece of God to the Tribes of Israel and neighboring countries. A prophet was a frequent visitor to both the courts of kings and to the streets of villagers.



Isaiah is noteworthy for being the most quoted of the prophets in the New Testament. Many passages are Messianic in nature, even predicting events in the life of Christ such as the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14). His writings cover a long period of time and a wide variety of topics.

Jeremiah was heavily persecuted for his prophesies during the Babylonian Siege. He often used metaphors such as the potter and clay (Jeremiah 18:1-7) to illustrate God's message to the people. Known as the weeping prophet, he is also believed to be the author of Lamentations.

Ezekiel prophesied during Israel's captivity in Babylon. He often received elaborate visions from God such as the *Vision of Dry Bones* where skeletons come to life to form a great army. Almost every aspect of his life served a symbolic purpose, from how he cooked his food to the way he slept at night.

Daniel was taken captive to Babylon at a young age. His gift to translate dreams gave him favor with kings. He often received prophetic visions of his own about the distant future. On one occasion he was thrown into a den of lions for serving God exclusively, but the Lord rescued him.



Hosea was chosen by God to be an example to the people of Israel. His wife was unfaithful, but just like God he never stopped loving her and always looked for her whenever she left him.

Joel prophesied during a time when the land of Israel had suffered from a great plague of locust. Joel proclaims this as a sign from God and a precursor to the Day of the Lord.

Amos was a sheep breeder and a tender of fig trees 'y trade, but God used him to bring a powerful word of correction to Israel and the surrounding nations.

Obadiah is the shortest book in the old testament with only 21 verses. The book is a proclamation of judgment against Edom for aiding the Babylonians in their siege against Jerusalem.

Jonah is the most famous of the minor prophets because a giant sea animal was used to set him back on course after going astray. His mission was to tell the people of Nineveh to repent of their wrongdoings.

Micah in 1:8 lamented without wearing clothes in order to illustrate the severity of the destitution and captivity that was coming. This method was also used by Isaiah at times (Isaiah 20:2-3).



Nahum predicts the destruction of Nineveh the great capital of the Assyrian empire. Evidently the reforms introduced by Jonah did not last long.

Habakkuk identifies himself as a psalmist and musician by ending his book with a hymn of redemption and grace to be played on stringed instruments by the temple worship leaders.

Zephaniah contains a series of stern judgments directed toward Israel, Judah, and her neighbors for permitting idolatry and other sins in the land.

Haggai makes his chief concern restoring the temple of the Lord. Despite the Hebrew's return from captivity, the temple had not yet been fully rebuilt.

Zechariah like Ezekiel received vivid prophesies in the form of highly symbolic visions. Some revelations include things like a flying scroll, olive trees, and women with wings. Several of the passages are Messianic in nature.

Malachi is a reformer who directs his message toward corrupt priests and those who withhold their offerings from the Lord. Malachi is the last book before the New Testament.

Major or Minor?

The designation of Major or Minor prophet is not determined by the greatness of a prophet's ministry, but simply by the amount of surviving writings. *Comparison by number of words in the 1611 King James Bible*

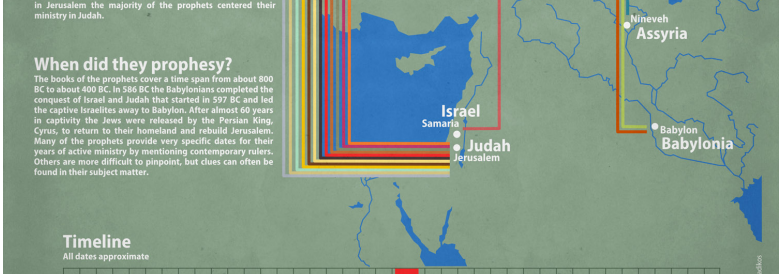


Where did they prophesy?

Following the reign of Solomon the nation of Israel divided into two kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom retained the name Israel and made Samaria the capital. The Southern Kingdom came to be be known as Judah and possessed the city of Jerusalem as its capital. Because the temple remained in Jerusalem the majority of the prophets centered their ministry in Judah.

When did they prophesy?

The books of the prophets cover a time span from about 800 BC to about 400 BC. In 586 BC the Babylonians completed the conquest of Israel and Judah that started in 597 BC and led the captive Israelites away to Babylon. After almost 60 years in captivity the Jews were released by the Persian King, Cyrus, to return to their homeland and rebuild Jerusalem. Many of the prophets provide very specific dates for their years of active ministry by mentioning contemporary rulers. Others are more difficult to pinpoint, but clues can often be found in their subject matter.



Timeline

All dates approximate



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Minor Prophets (in biblical order)	*Main Themes of their Writings*
Hosea	Salvation
Joel	**The Day of the Lord**
Amos	God's Judgment, **The Day of the Lord**, Israel's redemption
Obadiah	The destruction of Edom, **The Day of the Lord**
Jonah	Serving the Lord, His mercy
Micah	Injustice, oppression
Nahum	Judgement on Nineveh, comfort to Israel
Habakkuk	God embracing Judah, the destruction of Chaldea
Zephaniah	God's anger, **The Day of the Lord**, Israel repents and is spared
Haggai	Restoraton of the Temple
Zechariah	The building of the Temple, the coming of God's Kingdom
Malachi	The messenger to come, **The Day of the Lord**

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Minor Prophets		
Before Assyrian Captivity Directed to the North Kingdom	After Assyrian and before Babylonian captivities Directed to the South Kingdom	After Captivity
1. Hosea 2. Joel 3. Amos 4. Obadiah (Edom) 5. Jonah	6. Micah 7. Nahum (Nineveh) 8. Habakkuk 9. Zephaniah	10. Haggai 11. Zechariah 12. Malachi

Comments:

Theme of Malachi: The coming of God's kingdom
Messianic Prophecy: St. John the Baptist preparing the way before the Messiah (3:1)

- Malachi means "My Messanger/angel"
- Malachi was one of the three minor prophets who appeared after the return from exile
  - Malachi was the last prophet before the NT
  - He appeared about 400 years before Christ
- He prophesied about the prophet coming after him to prepare the way
  - The prophet is St. John the Baptist
- Nehemiah led the third and final returning wave from captivity
  - After he finished his ministry and built the walls, he returned to the King as he promised him before leaving (Nehemiah 1)
- Malachi appeared when Nehemiah left the people
- The people were living in prosperity at that time, so they fell into the sin of 'lukewarmness'
- Chapter 1
  - V.2 “I have loved you” summarizes the OT and God's relationship with mankind. He loved us which is why he came for us, did miracles for us, sent the Israelites to captivity and brought them back, etc.
  - The book has questions from the people to God that show their lukewarmness
    - Question 1: Mal. 1:2- Questioning how God loved them
      - One way to avoid lukewarmness is to remember God's mercy in our lives and always to give thanksgiving
      - Question 2: Mal. 1:6- Questioning God's sovereignty and honor
        - Getting used to the thing leads to lukewarmness sometimes. One way to avoid lukewarmness is to remember God's honor and always have God's fear in our hearts
      - Question 3: Mal. 1:10- God is questioning their spiritual life
        - They pray in the Temple, but not at their homes
        - Lukewarmness is shown in praying with groups but not alone at home
      - Malachi 1:11: A prophecy that the Gentiles will be accepted in the NT. The incense was only offered in the Temple only. It also shows the use of incense in the worship
      - Question 4: Mal. 1:13
        - Lukewarmness is shown in the signs of being weary and complaining
        - Avoiding the urge to complain and realizing God's blessings in our lives is a way of defeating lukewarmness
- Chapter 2
  - Question 5: Mal. 2:14
    - Lukewarmness is shown in breaking the law
      - Having a 'favorite' sin in our hearts leads to lukewarmness. Certain sins, lusts, wrong feelings, etc lead to lukewarmness
      - God used marriage as a sin where the consequences will last for a long time

        - This part shows the holiness of marriage and what God intended for the couple. It is a covenant, not a contract
    - V.16: Shows that God doesn’t like divorce and in certain cases, it is the last resort as a solution
    - Question 6: Mal. 2:17
        - Lukewarmness is shown in not realizing God's judgment and thinking that God doesn't reward the rights and judge the sinners. It's the way of thinking the world has no one in control and that the righteous and the sinners are 'just living' and no rewards/consequences
        - Lukewarmness can be avoided if the person realizes his/her faults and always ask God for His mercy and forgiveness
- Chapter 3
    - A famous chapter where Malachi prophesies about the prophet coming after him: St. John the Baptist
    - St. John the Baptist is the angel coming before God to prepare the way (people) as mentioned in Mark 1:1
        - Question 7: Mal. 3:7
            - Lukewarmness in the spiritual life can result from drifting away from tradition and from what the Church, as mothers, taught us to do. Thinking the church is old, God is not important, or the Clergy does not know anything causes lukewarmness.
        - Question 8: Mal. 3:8
            - We feel lukewarm towards God when we don't give the tithes. When we feel that God needs our tithes, not that we need to give, the heart becomes lukewarm.
            - Bringing the tithes (10%) is the beginning of giving. God wants the people to show their love. "Try me" means see what I will do to reward your love.
        - Question 9: Mal. 3:13
            - Lukewarmness is shown when people are harsh in their language with God. People think serving God is useless. Instead of feeling that we need to serve God for our edification, we take it as a burden and think it has no fruits/rewards. The same applies to prayers, fasting, repentance, etc.
- Chapter 4
    - V.1 The day of judgment will make the proud and the wicked be like stubble
    - V.2 The same day for the righteous will be a day of light and healing
    - Our Lord Jesus Christ "The Sun of Righteousness" in the second coming will judge the wicked and reward the righteous. That day will bring healing and good news for the righteous who were waiting for this day.

Review/recap questions:
***Servant may add more questions*

1. Where incense shall be offered to God’s Name?
2. What did the priests offer on God’s Altar?
3. What does God say about divorce?
4. In what did the people rob the Lord?

5. Who is the messenger that will prepare the way? Give a verse from the New Testament to support your answer.
6. Who will arise with healing in His wings?

Homework:

***Servant may add more questions*

1. For from the rising of the _____, even to its going down, My _____ shall be great among the _____; in every place_____ shall be offered to My name, and a pure _____."
2. For I am a great _____," Says the LORD of hosts, "And My _____ is to be feared among the _____."
3. The lips of the priest should keep:
   a) praise b) knowledge c) lies d) jokes
4. What was written before the Lord?
   a) the Holy Bible b) prophecies c) a book of remembrance d) letters
5. Then you shall again discern between the _____ and the wicked, between one who _____ God and _____ who does not serve Him.
6. But to you who fear My name The _____ _____ _____ shall arise with healing in His _____.
7. Behold, I will send you _____ the prophet before the coming of the _____ and dreadful _____ of the _____.

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