

Week 8: Habakkuk

Objective:

- The Prophet Questions God's Judgments
- The Lord's Reply
- The Just Shall Live by Faith
- Woe to the Wicked
- The Prophet's Prayer

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:

- Habakkuk 1
- Habakkuk 2
- Habakkuk 3

Key verse(s):

"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" Habakkuk 3:18

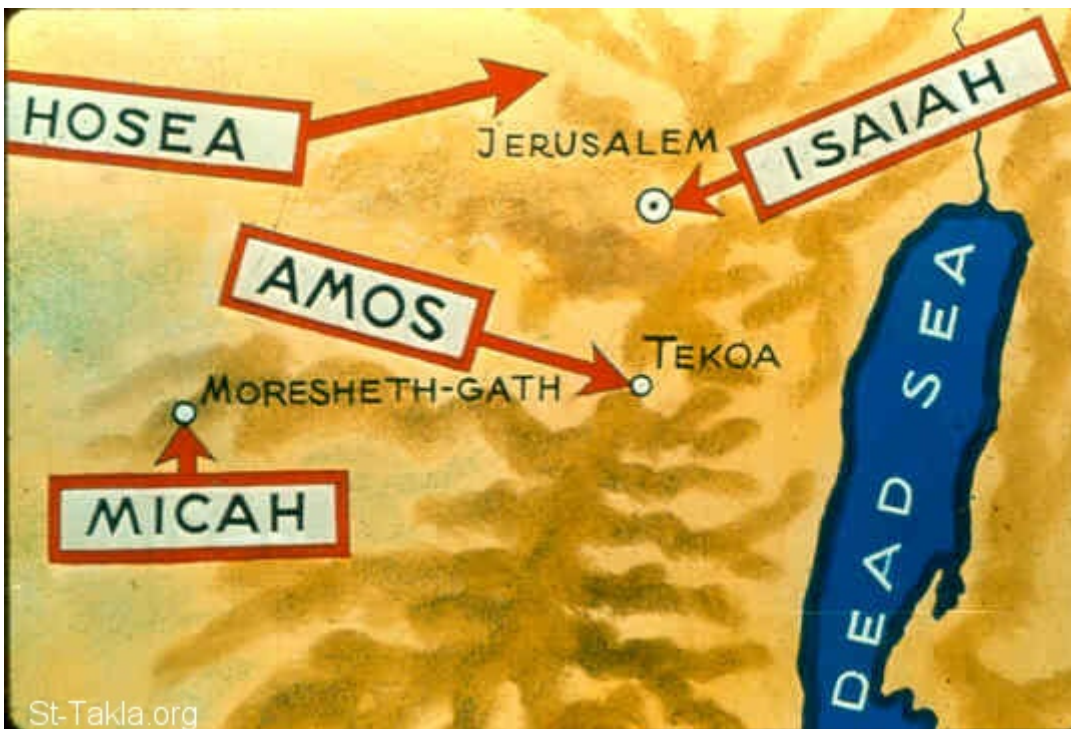
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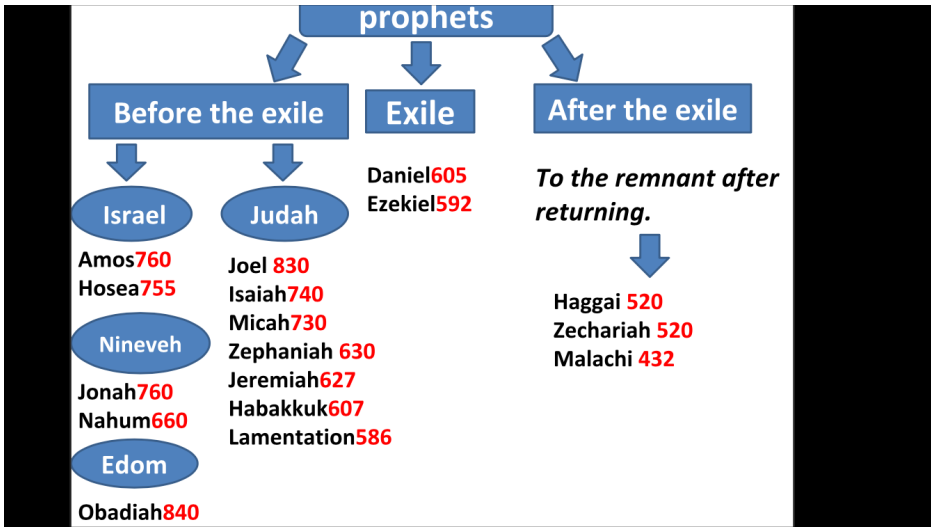
- Please plan to ask and review these questions every week:
 - Who are the minor prophets? Can you recite them?
 - The theme for last week's minor prophet
 - Highlight Messianic prophecy

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).





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 prophecies 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 locusts. Joel proclaims this as a sign from God and a precursor to the Day of the Lord.

Amos was a sheep breeder and a vinder of fig trees by 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 siding 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 ungodliness.

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 Josiah did not last long.

Habakkuk identifies himself as a prophet. His complaint to God is answered by a promise 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 made his chief concern restoring the temple of the Lord. Despite the Hebrews' return from captivity, the temple had not yet been fully rebuilt.

Zechariah like Ezekiel received vivid prophecies 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 1971 King James Bible

Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel
Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Where did they prophesy?

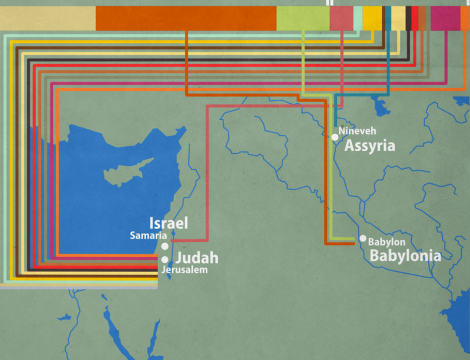
Following the reign of Solomon the nation of Israel divided into two kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom retained the name Israel and made Samaria the capital. The Southern Kingdom came to be known as Judah and possessed the city of Jerusalem as its capital. Because the temple remained in Jerusalem the majority 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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<i>Minor Prophets (in biblical order)</i>	<i>Main Themes of their Writings</i>
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	Restoration 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

The Minor Prophets

1. [Obadiah](#) - "Servant of Jehovah" (845 BC)
2. [Joel](#) - "Jehovah is God" (830 BC)
3. [Jonah](#) - "Dove" (780 BC)
4. [Amos](#) - "Burden-bearer" (755 BC)
5. [Hosea](#) - "Salvation" (750-725 BC)
6. [Micah](#) - "Who is like the Lord?" (740-700 BC)
7. [Zephaniah](#) - "Jehovah Hides" (625 BC)
8. [Nahum](#) - "Consolation" (630-612 BC)
9. [Habakkuk](#) - "Embrace" (612-606 BC)
10. [Haggai](#) - "Festive or Festival" (520 BC)
11. [Zachariah](#) - "Whom Jehovah Remembers" (520-518 BC)
12. [Malachi](#) - "My Messenger" (445-432 BC)

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 Habakkuk: God edifies His people through Babylon - Destruction of Babylon Messianic Prophecy: The Lord's incarnation (3:13)

- Habakkuk means "Embrace"
- Habakkuk was a Levite (Hab. 3:19)
- The book takes place before the exile of the South Kingdom.
- Although the book of Habakkuk does not mention a king's reign, internal evidence indicates a date between King Josiah's death (609 B.C.) and the beginning of the Babylonian captivity (605 B.C.).
- Habakkuk is the prophet mentioned in the book of Daniel (Daniel 14:33-36).
- A contemporary of Zephaniah and Jeremiah, Habakkuk warned of God's approaching judgment through the approaching Babylonians.
- The prophecy was fulfilled in 605 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar deported ten thousand of Jerusalem's prominent citizens to Babylon.
- The book can be divided into two parts:
 - Chapter 1-2: Habakkuk cries to the Lord - Expressing his problems
- Chapter 3: Habakkuk praises the Lord - Expressing his thanksgiving
- The main idea of the book:
 - Habakkuk stresses God's sovereign freedom as God to accomplish His good ends in His way. In spite of appearances to the contrary, God is still on the throne as the Lord of history and the Ruler of the nations.
- *The book contains questions the prophet directed to God.*
 - **Question 1: Why does God not respond to the wrong and injustice in the land (1:2-4)?**
 - **Answer 1: He is about to respond by using Babylon as a tool of judgment (1:5-11).**
 - **Question 2: Why does God use the wicked Babylonians to punish those more righteous than themselves (1:12, 13)?**
 - **Answer 2: God has chosen this action plan (2:2, 3). The just person will live by faith in God (2:4). Woe to the unrighteous (2:6-20).**
- **Chapter 1:**
 - The book starts with Habakkuk asking God "Why?"
 - God allows His people to ask Him why when the intention is to learn and feel comfortable. It's not good to ask God why to question Him and think that we can do better.
 - Obviously God hears everyone's cry and He always provides His comfort.
 - Habakkuk asked why does God allow His people to suffer and be attacked by the Babylonians. Later, Habakkuk would learn that God allowed this for His people's edification and salvation. He will reward the righteous and will avenge His people against the Babylonians.
- **Chapter 2:**
 - Habakkuk asked God what to do

- God answered by saying that Habakkuk should write the prophecy and make it very clear that the person running shall be able to read it.
- God's message to his people is very clear:
 - The proud's soul is not upright
 - The just shall live by his faith
- Habakkuk 2:4 summarizes the spiritual life. They just shall be faithful and know that everything will come to an end and that God is in control (The Pantocartor).
- Chapter 3:
 - After Habakkuk asked all his questions and the Lord answered them, he wrote a beautiful praise expressing God's mercy and compassion towards mankind.
 - 3:13 is a Messianic prophecy. God will incarnate and will save His people through His Anointed One. He "struck the head of the wicked" on the Cross.
 - Habakkuk understood that if the people repented, God would come, live with them, and will save them.
 - Chapter 3:17-19
 - A beautiful hymn by Habakkuk
 - Starts with "though" shows Habakkuk's great faith
 - Everything might not seem good. Things might not seem bright. "Though" things are not going well, Habakkuk will rejoice in the Lord.

Review/recap questions:

***Servant may add more questions*

1. Habakkuk questions God's righteousness. Give verses.
2. By what shall the just live?
3. Find a prophecy about the Lord Jesus Christ in chapter 3.
4. Habakkuk rejoiced in the Lord under hard conditions. Give verse.

Homework:

***Servant may add more questions*

1. What kind of nation is the Chaldeans?
 - a) bitter b) terrible c) hasty d) all of these
2. Their horses also are swifter than _____, and more fierce than evening _____. Their chargers charge ahead; their cavalry comes from afar; they fly as the _____ that hastens to eat.
3. For the earth will be filled with the _____ of the _____ of the LORD, as the waters cover the _____.
4. But the LORD is in His holy _____. Let all the earth keep _____ before _____."
5. Yet I will _____ in the LORD, I will _____ in the God of my _____.
6. The LORD God is my _____; He will make my feet like _____'s feet, and He will make me walk on my _____ hills.

Revision #3

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