Week 9: Zephaniah

Objective:

- The Great Day of the Lord
- A Call to Repentance
- Judgment on Nations
- The Wickedness of Jerusalem
- A Faithful Remnant
- Joy in God’s Faithfulness

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:

- Zephaniah 1
- Zephaniah 2:1-3
- Zephaniah 3:8-20

Key verse(s):

"At that time I will bring you back, Even at the time, I gather you" Zephaniah 3:20

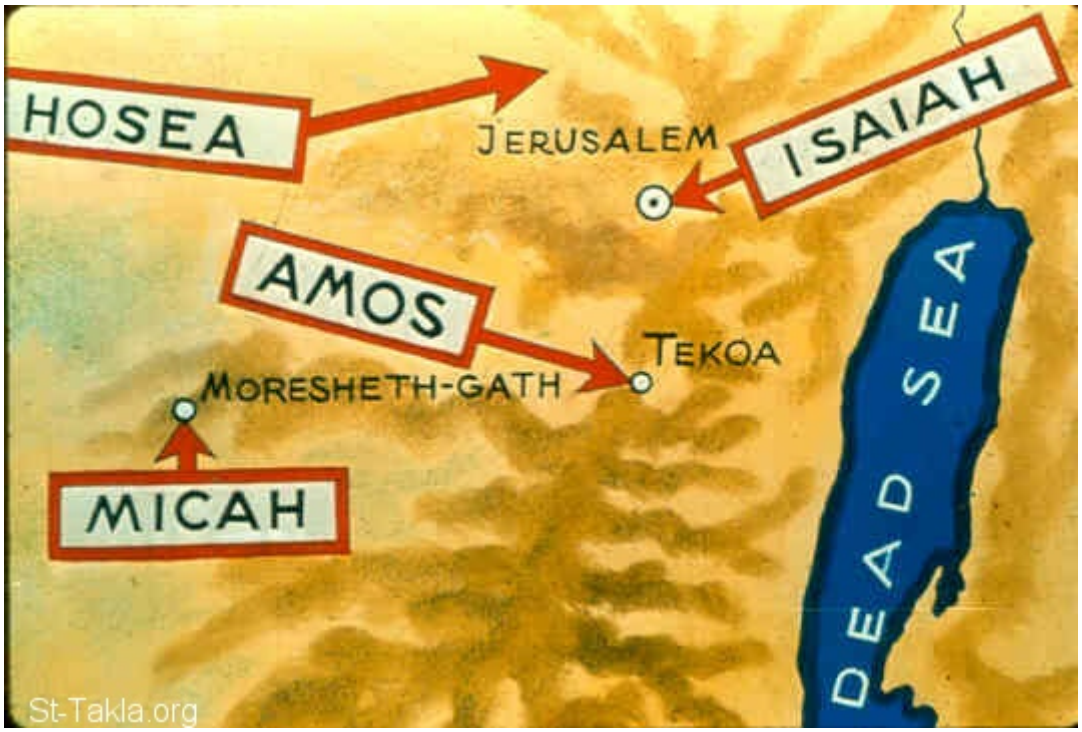
NOTE TO SERVANT:

- 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

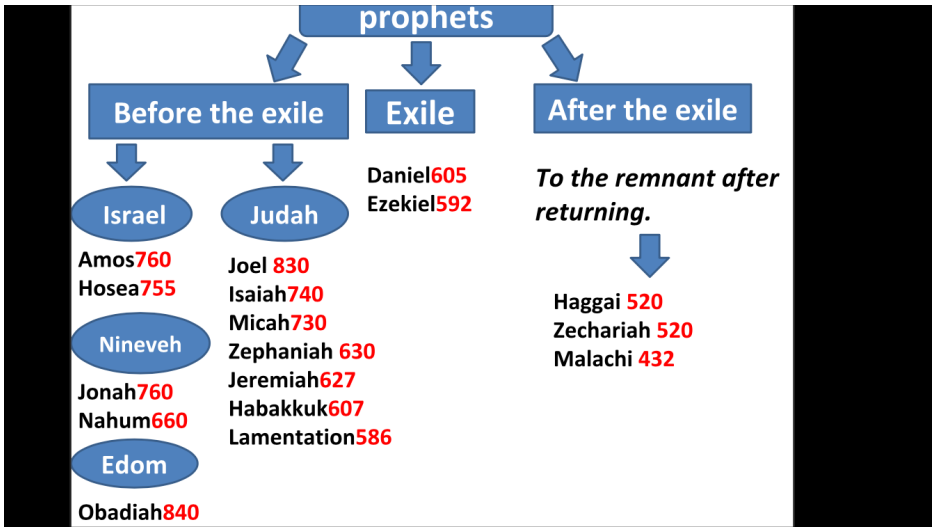
Minor Prophets introduction:

- 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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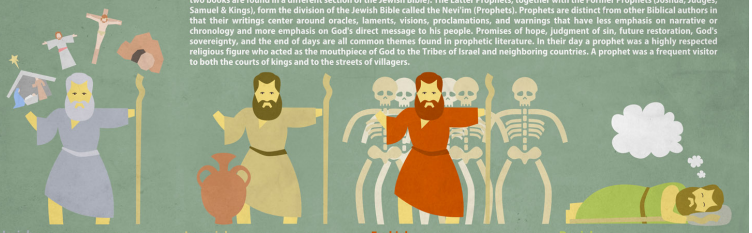


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prophets
Before the exile
Exile
After the exile
Israel
Judah
Amos760
Hosea755
Nineveh
Jonah760
Nahum660
Edom
Obadiah840
Joel 830
Isaiah740
Micah730
Zephaniah 630
Jeremiah627
Habakkuk607
Lamentation586
Daniel605
Ezekiel592
To the remnant after returning.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

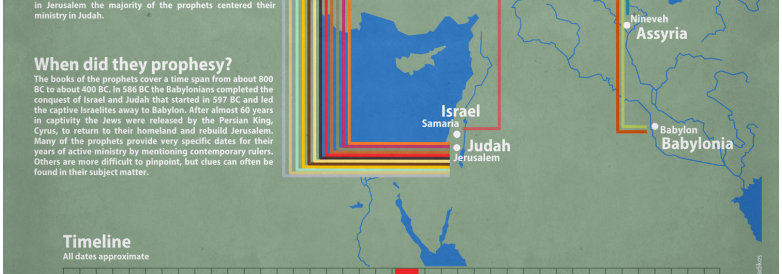


Where did they prophesy?

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 Zephaniah: The judgment and blessing of Jerusalem
Messianic Prophecy: The Lord's sacrifice (1:7)

- Zephaniah means "God hides"
- Zephaniah was a priest from the family of King Hezekiah
- Normally the genealogy of a prophet is traced no further than his father. Zephaniah, however, traces his ancestry back four generations to demonstrate his royal lineage as the great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah (1:1).
  - Thus, he was a distant relative of King Josiah and those to whom he addresses his prophecy.
- Zephaniah lived at the time of Jeremiah and the destruction of the destruction of the Temple
  - Therefore the book sends a final warning to the people before the Babylonian Exile
- The book focuses on “The Day of the Lord” which is mentioned 7 times
  - This refers to the destruction of Jerusalem as a result of sin
- Chapter 1:
  - V.1: Shows the genealogy of Zephaniah and the time of his prophecy during the reign of King Josiah
  - V.7-9:
    - "Be silent in the presence of the Lord God" because the people are waiting for God to see what He will do
      - V. 7: Refers to the NT. A man usually prepares the sacrifice. But this time, God Himself will prepare the sacrifice. This means that God Himself will offer Himself as a sacrifice on behalf of His people
      - God made a Holy sacrifice. His people are not worthy, therefore he will "sanctify" His people. Invited them = sanctified them. They can not be invited without sanctification
      - Very similar to the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Matt. 22 & Lk. 14)
      - The "clothed with foreign apparel" means not clothed with Baptism. Not clothed with Christ and the Grace of the NT. They will be cast out. They want to take a shortcut and not go through baptism (they want to leap over) (V.9)
- Chapter 2:
  - Talks about the people's repentance
  - He called them an "undesirable nation" as they needed to repent to be desired
  - "Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth" This Invitation for everyone to go to God
  - "Seek righteousness, seek humility" so that you may be saved in the day of the Lord's anger AKA be saved and accepted by God.
- Chapter 3:
  - Praise regarding the joy of the NT (V.14-20)
  - "Daughter of Zion" is the Church of the NT
  - God removed the judgments and defeated Satan (V.15)

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

1. Who was king at the time of Zephaniah?
2. What sacrifice would the Lord prepare and who are His guests?
3. Describe the Day of the Lord.
4. What does the prophet urge the nation to do?
5. Why should the faithful of Jerusalem rejoice?

Homework:
***Servant may add more questions*

1. God will punish those who fill their master’s house with:
   a) money b) lies c) fruits d) violence
2. (Zephaniah 1:14) The great day of the LORD is near; it is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the Day of the LORD is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out. Who said this?
3. What will the people do with a pure language?
4. (Zephaniah 3:17) "The LORD your God is in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." What does this mean?

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