

SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT



Welcome
to
Studio Scriptura

SOT.13 Minor Prophets






Logistics & Learning Objectives:

1. Learning Objectives. Participants will gain a high level understanding of the Minor Prophets

New King James Version,
1988. Nashville: Holman
Bible Publishers.



“Behold the proud,
His soul is not upright in
him; but the just shall live
by his faith.

Habakkuk 2:4

INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

The history of these 12 prophets covered a span of more than three centuries.

The books of the Minor Prophets cover the period from the eighth to the fifth centuries BC. This time began with an era of great prosperity for both Israel (northern kingdom) and Judah (southern kingdom) but ended in disaster for both kingdoms.

Three of the Minor Prophets are focused on the northern kingdom of Israel (Samaria): Hosea: God's Unquenchable Love Amos: God's Ultimate Justice Jonah: God's Universal Concern

Six of the Minor Prophets are focused on the southern kingdom (Jerusalem): Joel: Day of the Lord. Obadiah: Doom of Edom. Micah: Divine Lawsuit. Nahum: Destruction of Nineveh. Habakkuk: Destruction of Babylon. Zephaniah: Disaster Is Imminent.

The last three Minor Prophets are focused on the Jewish exiles who have returned from Babylon to rebuild the temple and reestablish Jerusalem. They form the final link to the Messianic prophecies, which are fulfilled in Jesus in the New Testament: Haggai: Rebuild the Temple. Zechariah: Restore the people. Malachi: Repent of Sin.

HOSEA - GOD'S UNQUENCHABLE LOVE

Hosea ("salvation") prophesied from the reign of Jeroboam II (791–750 BC) to the reign of Hezekiah (715–687 BC), and his ministry likely covered a time span of 35–40 years. Most of Hosea's recorded messages focus on the coming judgment of Israel and thus occurred before the fall of Samaria in 722 BC.

Hosea's ministry began at a time of great economic prosperity for Israel that rapidly disintegrated into one of national catastrophe. Spiritual syncretism and a climate of injustice prevailed as the rich used their power and influence to take advantage of the poor. All this exacerbated by ungodly leaders

To make His point, God commanded Hosea to marry a promiscuous and unfaithful wife, who subsequently gave birth to three children. Both the woman and the children were emblematic of Israel's unfaithfulness toward the Lord.

The people did not think the Lord saw or took notice of their actions. They did not simply break God's laws - they broke His heart.

The final message in the book of Hosea is one of hope and promise.

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JOEL - THE DAY OF THE LORD

The people struggle with spiritual lethargy, misplaced priorities, and outright disobedience to God's commands.

The prophecy of Joel had an impact far beyond the audience that he personally addressed, because later interpreters applied it directly to their own generations. This is particularly evident in the apostle Peter's use of Joel's prophecy in the birth of the church at Pentecost.

When the Holy Spirit came on those in the upper room, the change that occurred in them caused quite a stir among the many visitors who were in Jerusalem for the Pentecost feast - and for the world! Peter spoke up and immediately explained the phenomenon as a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy found in 2:28-32.

The apostles' situation had two significant similarities with the prophecy of Joel—the endowment of the Spirit, and the need of the moment to call upon the Lord and be saved.

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JOEL 2:28-32
For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh. Acts 2:15-17a

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"And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Joel 2:28a

The apostle Peter's use of Joel's prophecy of Joel—the endowment of the Spirit, and be saved.

AMOS - GOD'S EXPECTATION for SOCIAL JUSTICE

"The book of Amos forecasts disaster for the northern kingdom of Israel in the form of Assyrian invasion and exile as a result of entrenched religious hypocrisy and social injustice.

Religious apostasy, moral and social collapse, and political corruption of the northern kingdom prompted God to send the Judahite, Amos across the border to prophesy in Israel.

"Therefore thus says the Lord: 'Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; Your land shall be divided by survey line; You shall die in a defiled land; And Israel shall surely be led away captive From his own land.'" Amos 7:17

His impassioned pleas for the socially disadvantaged (i.e., the poor, needy, and afflicted; cf. 2:6–7; 4:1; 5:11–12) and his denouncement of their affluent oppressors (i.e., rich women, dishonest merchants, corrupt rulers, opportunistic lawyers and judges, and false priests; cf. 4:1) have earned him a reputation as God's spokesman for social justice (cf. 5:7, 15, 24).

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Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: "I was no prophet, Nor was I a son of a prophet, But I was a sheep-breeder and a tender of sycamore fruit. Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, And the Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.' Amos 7:14-15

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OBADIAH - DOOM OF EDOM

The purpose of the book of Obadiah is to pronounce divine judgment against the nation of Edom for their role in assisting the Babylonians in the conquest of Judah, and to announce the future divine restoration of the people of Israel.

Edom not only assisted Babylon in the sack of Jerusalem, but also occupied Judean villages well into the Persian period.

Implicit throughout this brief prophecy - and virtually all prophetic literature in the Old Testament - is Yahweh's universal dominion over the nations.

Thematic message: Pride distorts one's view of reality and blinds people to the truth. Edom's pride carried the seeds of its own destruction - God has purposed to bring low all who boast in conceit and insolence.

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JONAH - GOD'S UNIVERSAL LOVE & CALL FOR REPENTANCE

The book of Jonah is unique among the prophetic books of the Old Testament. Rather than being a collection of the oracles by the prophet, it is a historical narrative.

Jonah was hesitant in his obedience - and then angry that God's grace was applied to Nineveh.

Thematic messages - God reserves the sovereign right to be compassionate. God urges Israel to move beyond its theological exclusiveness and evangelize other nations. God's leniency toward the wicked when they repent.

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MICAH - GOD'S DIVINE LAWSUIT

A contemporary of the well-known prophet Isaiah. Micah was a prophet from a small town located in the hilly region of Judah between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean Sea.

Micah denounced injustice and false religiosity.

Micah issues a call to *listen* to the word of the Lord. The language he uses is of a legal proceeding.

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KEY VERSES:

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting." Micah 5:2

"He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6:8

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Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:" Matthew 2:1-5

NAHUM - THE DOOM OF NINEVEH

The purpose of the book of Nahum is to pronounce the doom of Nineveh.

In the eighth century BC the prophet Jonah went to the city of Nineveh to issue a call for repentance and potential judgement. The Ninevites responded with repentance and God spared them. More than a century later, however, Nahum declared the judgment of God upon the wicked city of Nineveh. This time there was no repentance, fasting or sackcloth - and Nineveh was not spared.

The centerpiece of the Assyrian collapse was the fall of Nineveh.

HABAKKUK - THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

Examines the issue of God's justice on a national plane. The main question of the book, *Why do the wicked go unpunished?* The response is, God is patient - but eventually the wicked will be punished.

The *wisdom* tone of the prophecy distinguishes it from the rest of the prophetic literature

Even when the world is in confusion and God's purposes and plans are obscured, the righteous person has a responsibility to conduct himself or herself with integrity. It is in those situations that faithfulness to God and trust in Him are most difficult - so the faith of a righteous person in such challenging days shines like a beacon.

God's use of the Babylonians as an instrument to punish Judah did not imply His approval of Babylon. God could and does sovereignly use nations as He desires..

Human responsibility does not lay in having all the answers - but in responding to God in the proper way. The key to this response is found in Habakkuk 2:4b: "But the righteous will live by his faith"

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:16-17

ZEPHANIAH - THE DAY OF THE LORD

Initiates change in Judah by pronouncing God's judgment on wickedness. Coupled with God's intention to punish, came the proclamation of his intention to restore Judah.

A significant part of the book's perspective is that the political upheaval they were experiencing at that time would have far-reaching effects.

Directed toward the humble of the land and urged them to seek the Lord so that in His mercy they might be spared from the judgment that was to come on the rest of the people.

There may be numerous "days of the Lord" before the day of the Lord that will inaugurate a new order that will never again be at risk or destabilized.

Thus the day of the Lord became widely proclaimed by the prophets to convey God's approaching judgment on Israel and Judah, though the related aftermath oracles conveyed that God's eventual new order was to feature a politically restored and theologically purified people.

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HAGGAI - REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

Postexilic/Persian Period - the time of the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem upon the return of the Hebrews from Babylonian captivity. Haggai and Zechariah are complementary prophets of the postexilic period.

Along with Daniel, Joel, and Malachi, they comprise the corpus of Old Testament prophetic literature dating to the Persian period of Hebrew history.

The reign of Darius I, king of Persia (521–486 BC). The people were inspired by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to mobilize for a second reconstruction project (Ezra 5:11–12).

Haggai called the people to proper worship of LORD in contrast to blind faith in a building. By the time of Jeremiah the temple had become sort of a *lucky charm*.

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HAGGAI

Themes:

Awakening the people of Jerusalem to their responsibilities, obligations, privileges, and promises of the covenant. Rebukes the community of former exiles for their preoccupation with personal comforts.

Called the people to repentance and challenged them *give careful thought to their ways*.

God's intention and reminder that divine justice was still operative in human history - awakened their dormant faith.

Rekindled the messianic expectation among the Israelites. Divine pledge vindicating Israel as God's elect and guaranteeing His fulfillment of all covenant vows.

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ZECHARIAH - REPENTANCE & THE COMING MESSIAH

Post Exilic/Persian Period.

Zechariah summoned the community to repentance and spiritual renewal. Selfishness crippled their community spirit, and the general mood of the period was gloomy/dismal. Zechariah complemented Haggai's message in calling for a spiritual revival.

The book is conveniently divided into two major parts. The first includes the call to repentance (1:1–6), the seven night visions (1:7–6:15), and the two oracles addressing the topic of fasting (7–8).

The second part consists of eschatological oracles.

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ZECHARIAH

Zechariah has more to say about the messianic shepherd-king than any other Old Testament book except Isaiah.

Zechariah predicted that deliverance will be accomplished by this messianic shepherd-king who will first be rejected and struck down (11:4–17). Yet His ministry will be one of peace and reconciliation and cleansing by the Holy Spirit (9:9–10).

A concept associated with the *day of the Lord* in Zechariah is the regathering and restoration of Israel (10:9–12).

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MALACHI - WHOLEHEARTED WORSHIP & THE COMING OF ELIJAH-LIKE PROPHET

Calls post exilic Israel to repentance for the purpose of covenant renewal with Yahweh as God desires wholehearted worship.

Some key themes: God expects faithfulness in marriage. God hates divorce. The day of the Lord affects both the righteous and the wicked. An Elijah-like figure will announce the day of the Lord. rebuke of the people for insincere worship

Malachi's staunch convictions against idolatry (2:10–12), easy divorce (2:13–16), and social injustice (3:5) come from a prophet known for his commitment and integrity

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MALACHI *(continued)*

Malachi's Series of 10 Questions:

1. "I have loved you," says the Lord. Yet you say, "In what way have You loved us?" Malachi 1:2
2. "A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence?" Says the Lord of hosts. "To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'" Malachi 1:6
3. "You offer defiled food on My altar, But say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the Lord is contemptible.'" Malachi 1:7
4. "Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant." Malachi 2:14

MALACHI *(continued)*

5. You have wearied the Lord with your words; Yet you say, "In what way have we wearied Him?" In that you say, "Everyone who does evil Is good in the sight of the Lord, And He delights in them," Malachi 2:17a
6. "Where is the God of justice?" Malachi 2:17b
7. "Yet from the days of your fathers You have gone away from My ordinances And have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," Says the Lord of hosts. "But you said, 'In what way shall we return?'" Malachi 3:7
8. "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings." Malachi 3:8
9. "Your words have been harsh against Me," Says the Lord, "Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?'" Malachi 3:13
10. "You have said, 'It is useless to serve God; What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, And that we have walked as mourners Before the Lord of hosts?' So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised/built up" Malachi 3:14-15

MALACHI - SOME KEY VERSES

For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations," Says the Lord of hosts. Malachi 1:11

"For the Lord God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence," Says the Lord of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously." Malachi 2:16

"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight Behold, He is coming," Says the Lord of hosts. Malachi 3:1

And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, against adulterers, against perjurers, against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, and against those who turn away an alien because they do not fear Me," Says the Lord of hosts. Malachi 3:5

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. Malachi 3:10

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." Malachi 4:5-6

So What & Now What?



- ❑ Before next week's class, finish up your reading of the Old Testament
- ❑ Written Short Answer and/or Discuss:
 - ❑ Write a brief introduction to the Minor Prophets (100 words)
 - ❑ What are several lessons and references from the Minor Prophets that help guide our thinking on *Social Justice*? (150 Words)
 - ❑ How do the lessons from the Minor Prophets help round out your understanding of the Old Testament? (100 Words)



OTS.14 Christ in the Old Testament
7pm (PT U.S.)

