

Touring the Old Testament

Hosea - Malachi



Minor Prophets

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Hosea through Malachi

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PREFACE

These short books called the minor prophets had and will have a major effect on history if the words are observed. They are very appropriate for every time in history. Each individual author spent much time alone in intimacy with the Lord in order to understand and convey the heart of God for an individual and a people group. Their words portray the amazing multifaceted character of the Lord. They show particularly His patience, forgiveness, justice, holiness and love. Judgment on sinful acts, forgiveness and loving restoration is clearly displayed. The future time of the Millennial Kingdom is also described.

Maybe you will note that the more we begin to understand our Creator, the more we realize that we don't know about Him. It has been said that we can look at a tiny grain of sand, debate about its composition and theorize about it, when the Lord has countless grains of sand, as on the seashore, for us to see, understand and appreciate. His knowledge is so vast that our small minds will never begin to understand, yet He desires for us to seek and know Him and become one with Him! He wants us to know and feel His burdens which are revealed through these prophets.

As you read these gems, may your spirit be deeply encouraged. We know that He is pleased when we hunger to know Him more, long for His presence and yield our heart to Him. May His love which surpasses knowledge envelope you as you study these timeless words.

In this study, the New American Standard Bible, the New Open Bible study edition was used. It was published by Thomas Nelson Inc, Copyright, 1990.

HOSEA

Author: Hosea, meaning Deliverer, Helper, Salvation. Hosea had a tender heart and was called the weeping prophet to Israel as Jeremiah was to Judah. His ministry covered a period of about 40 years during the reigns of king Jeroboam II of Israel. He also was a contemporary of Isaiah and Micah in Judah, and of Amos in Israel.

Setting: 755-715 BC. Jeroboam II reigned over apostate Israel also called “Ephraim”. During this time Israel was enjoying temporary political and economic prosperity but sin was rampant and the priests were often the leaders in wickedness. In Chapter 6:9 a band of priests commit murder on the way to Shechem, which was a city of refuge. Social conditions were worse than ever before: drunkenness, lying, stealing, immorality, and idolatry besides murder, were rampant. Assyria, the regional power inhabiting the northern part of present-day Iraq, was very strong and was expanding their empire.

Theme: The loyal love of God for Israel. This book presents the symbolism of God’s forgiving love for adulterous Israel. **Hosea represents Jehovah God; Gomer, his prostitute wife, represents adulterous Israel.**

Survey: This book presents a unique way that God used to communicate to His people the scope of His forgiveness. Hosea is instructed to marry a prostitute, have children by her and name them:

1. Jezreel meaning “sow or scatter.” Later changed to “gathered.” (1:11, 2:23).
2. Lo-ruhamah meaning “no mercy” Later changed to “received mercy” (1:10, 2:23).
3. Lo-ammi meaning “not My people” Later changed to “My people” (1:9 2:23).

Hosea obeys God in marrying a prostitute, but after the birth of the three children, she leaves him and returns to prostitution. She finally sinks so low her lovers reject her, and she is about to be sold on the slave market (3:1). Hosea is instructed to go and buy her back and have her remain with him for many days alone, and then he was instructed to woo her again and receive her back as his wife. This symbolized Israel in the latter days remaining without a king, and how later it would be wooed back to God.

Noteworthy Scriptures:

2:19 I will betroth you to Me forever...in righteousness and justice....and in mercies.

3:5 In the latter days Israel shall return to God and will seek Him and David their king. This says that David in his resurrected body will reign over Israel in the Millennium. (See Eze 34:23-24)

4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (understanding, skill, wisdom, discernment).

5:7 They have dealt treacherously (break covenant, contract) against the Lord.

6:1,2 Come, let us return to the Lord...He will revive us after two days...raise us up the third day and we shall live in His sight. This is an Old Testament prediction of the resurrection of the dead of those who trust in Jesus. Each day is as a thousand years in the sight of God (2 Pet 3:8) and approximately 2000 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, His saints who have died will experience a bodily resurrection.

6:6 God desires mercy more than sacrifice and knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. Jesus quoted this verse when the Pharisees unjustly condemned sinners and tax collectors. (Mt 9:13)

8:4 They have set up kings, but not by Me...appointed princes, but I did not know it. This does not mean that God was ignorant of those appointments, but instead did not agree with them. In other words, not every ruler is appointed by God, and evil rulers do not have to be obeyed. (Ex 1:17-20)

8:7 They sow the wind, and they reap the whirlwind.

9:10 I saw your fathers as the earliest fruit on the fig tree. (The fig tree is the symbol for Israel.)

11:1-12 Depicts God's unfailing love for Israel otherwise known as Ephraim. Verse 1 is a prophecy that God would call Jesus back from Egypt where He had been carried to escape death at the hands of Herod the Great, who killed the infants of Bethlehem who were 2 years old and under.

14:2b That we may present the fruit of our lips (our words) in repentance for our sins.

14:9 For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them...This gives the lie to those who say that they can never walk in God's ways because they are too difficult. God demands that we walk in His ways. In this way we can become more like Him.

Hosea predicts:

- The fall of Samaria by the Assyrians (10:5-8).
- The deliverance of Judah from the Assyrians (1:7). After King Hezekiah's intercession, 185,000 Assyrians were killed by the angel of the Lord and Jerusalem was spared! (701 BC)
- The later punishment of Judah (5:10, and by fire 8:14b). Occurred in 586 BC.
- Final restoration. "They will come trembling to the Lord." (3:4-5).

Christ seen:

Hosea himself represents Jesus as the eternal husband who is forever married to the backslider, because he says, "I will betroth thee unto me forever." (2:19)

Significance in the Old Testament:

Hosea was the counterpoint to the prophet Amos in calling the attention of the people of Israel to their sins and departure from God. Hosea's main concern was the unfaithfulness of Israel to God, while Amos' main concern was the unjust practices of the people. Each prophet added emphasis to the words of the other, as God called Israel to repentance through both men.

JOEL

Author: Joel in Hebrew “yo el” means that Yahweh is God. This prophet lived in Judah and prophesied to Judah. Joel is a very common name in the Bible. Joel prophesied during the reign of Joash, the child who became king and who repaired the temple and served God as long as Jehoiada the priest was alive. After Jehoiada’s death, Joash served other gods and had Jehoiada’s son murdered because he had rebuked the king. The Lord sent the Arameans (Syrians) against Judah and Judah was defeated. Joash’s servants murdered him. II Chron. 24, II Kings 12.

Settings: Written between 835-795 B.C. to Judah, the southern kingdom. A terrible locust plague had just occurred in Judah. Joel likens the coming judgment to what had just happened. So also an army from the North would come and attack the nation leaving a worse devastation behind. Their only hope was repentance.

Theme: The Day of the Lord. This phrase appears 5 times in this book. Judgment was predicted but deliverance and restoration would be to those who trust in the Lord. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is predicted.

Survey and Noteworthy Scriptures:

I. The Day of the Lord in Retrospect (looking back): The plagues of locust and drought: Chap.1:1-20.

II. The Day of the Lord in Prospect (looking ahead): Chap. 2:1- 3:21

A. The Imminent (soon coming) Day of the Lord. This includes the invasion of Judah and the conditional response including the promise of salvation. Chap. 2:1-27

2:12-13 “Return to Me with all your heart... for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in loving-kindness and relenting of evil.”

2:21-27 “Do not fear... rejoice ... you shall have plenty...never put to shame, thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel and that I am the Lord your God and there is no other”.

B. The Ultimate (in the future) Day of the Lord: Chap 2:28-3:21

2:28-32 “And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh (Believer’s flesh); and your sons and daughters will prophesy and your old men will dream dreams and your young men shall see visions...” When the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, the conditions of verses 26-27 were not fulfilled because the Israelites were ashamed of the Roman yoke that they were under. In these “Last Days” when Israel recognizes Yeshua as their Lord and Savior, the time will be ripe for verses 28-29 to be fulfilled.

3:2 Battle in valley of Jehoshaphat (Armageddon). Then I will enter into judgment with them there. (This is in present day Israel). It is the Valley of Decision of 3:14. The nations will be judged for dividing the land of Israel and scattering the Israelis. This is a stern warning for America.

3:16 “The Lord roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem, the heavens and earth tremble but the Lord is a refuge for His people and a stronghold to the sons of Israel.”

3:18-21...”The mountains will drip with sweet wine and the hills will flow with milk... a spring will go out... but Judah will be inhabited forever...avenge their blood...” The dripping of sweet (new) wine from the mountains refers to the Holy Spirit being poured out in remote places. The hills flowing with milk refers to the simple truths of the gospel being taught in the countryside.

Christ seen:

The Lord is seen as the baptizer with the Holy Spirit so the world may see and experience His power and love through His people, and may be reconciled to God by this testimony.

Significance in the Old Testament:

Joel shows that after sincere repentance for sins, the Lord will restore what the enemy has stolen from His people, and will defend them, and will judge the nations for afflicting Israel and dividing their land. God is the loving Father who restores, protects, and prospers His people and judges their enemies.

AMOS

Author: Amos, which means “herdsman” was a native of Tekoa, the hill country 6 miles south of Bethlehem. He was not trained as a prophet nor was he the son of a prophet. He was a herdsman, tending a small breed of small sheep, which produced wool of the best quality. He also tended sycamore figs. He was well versed in the Scriptures, and had a keen sense of morality and justice. Although he lived in the Southern Kingdom, he prophesied to the Northern Kingdom from about 760-753 B.C. He was a contemporary of the prophets Isaiah and Hosea.

Setting: Amos evidently received his call while tending sheep. He was obedient, left the fields, in the south and went to the Northern Kingdom, King Jeroboam’s palace in Bethel. Here he pronounced judgment on the surrounding nations first and then judgment on King Jeroboam and his Kingdom. Amaziah, the priest at Bethel, rebuked Amos because he had said that King Jeroboam would die and Israel would go into exile. (7:11). Amaziah told Amos to go flee back to Judah, and stop prophesying against the king (7:12,13) Amos then defended his call and told Amaziah that his wife would become a harlot, his sons and daughters would be killed, his land taken and he would die upon unclean soil (7:14-17) Amos was bold! It actually happened later! The people in the Northern Kingdom were enjoying relative prosperity but idolatry was rampant, as was immorality and injustice. The judges were also corrupt.

Theme: Judgment of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) because of broken covenant. Restoration is predicted in the end time.

Survey:

- Eight prophesies against seven neighbors of Israel, and then Israel’s judgment. God is in control of all nations. He is holy and just.
- Three sermons showing the sins of Israel past, present and future (2:6-5:15).
- Five visions: locust swarm, fire, plumb line, basket of summer fruit and the Lord beside the altar.
- Restoration of Israel (9:11-15).

Noteworthy Scriptures:

1:2 The Lord roars from Zion
 2:4 Judgment of Judah because they rejected the law
 3:3 Do two men walk together unless they agree?
 3:7 Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets.
 3:12b The sons of Israel, dwelling in Samaria will be snatched away.
 4:13 (God) declares to man what are His thoughts.
 5:14, 15 Call to repentance
 5:23,24 “Take away from Me the noise of your songs, I will not even listen to the sound of your harps, but let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

9:11-15 Restoration predicted. In verses 11 and 12 the prediction of raising up the tabernacle of David has been fulfilled in that God is available to all people through worship and prayer, and not just to certain priests. Also the worship of the tabernacle of David has been restored to the modern church through trained singers and skillful players of instruments. Verse 14 has also been fulfilled since the people of Israel have returned to their ancient land, declared it to be a nation in 1948, and have greatly prospered in food production. Verse 15 promises that the

people of Israel will never again be removed out of their land. No matter how many Arab nations fight against Israel, they will never prevail, and Israel will remain on their own land forever.

Christ seen:

Christ as the burden-bearer of His people is manifested through the prophet Amos, who was very concerned about how Israel's sins had made a mockery of the justice and righteousness of God. Many centuries later Jesus bore the heavy burden of sin and guilt for the whole world as He suffered and died on the cross, that those who trusted in Him would have their sins and guilt taken away, and be considered righteous in God's kingdom.

Significance in the Old Testament:

The significance of Amos' prophecy is to give the northern kingdom of Israel a strong warning of destruction and captivity unless the people turn from their sins and seek God's will and walk in His ways. Amos' message confirms the message of Hosea who prophesied at about the same time.

OBADIAH

Author: Obadiah, which means “servant of the Lord” or “worshipper of the Lord.” There are 13 Obadiahs in the O.T. It is unsure which one he was. He was probably not from the priestly line because his father is not mentioned.

Setting: Scholars disagree concerning the time of the book. The time could be around 586 B.C., after the fall of Jerusalem, or around 840 B.C. This book speaks about the invasion of Jerusalem, which happened four times in Old Testament history. I believe the time was after 586 BC, the most significant, complete fall of Jerusalem. Judah, at that time was in complete rebellion against God and the prophets He sent, especially Jeremiah.

Theme: Judgment against Edom, the nation whose people were Esau’s descendants, Jacob’s brother. Historical notes: Edom had refused to allow Israel to pass through its land on the way to Caanan. Also, after Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., the land of Edom was invaded by the Nabateans who forcibly drove out the Edomites to southern Judah.

Survey:

- Prediction of judgment (9).
- Reason for judgment:
 1. Because of violence to brother Jacob (10)
 2. The Edomites stood in pride when strangers carried off the wealth of Jerusalem. They also rejoiced (11-12).
 3. They looted the wealth also (13b)
 4. Stood at a fork of the road (crossway) to cut down fugitives from Jerusalem (14)
- Results of judgment; “As you have done, it will be done to you.” (15)
The house of Esau will be as stubble, there will be no survivor (18).
- Restoration of Israel, the House of Jacob will possess their land (17-21)

Historical aftermath: In 70AD, the Roman Titus destroyed Jerusalem and Edom. The final destruction was caused by the Mohammedans in 636AD. The city of Petra, hewn out of solid rock, was totally destroyed. There were no survivors.

Important: In this book there is **no plea to repent, no consolation, or hope, and no survivors.**

Noteworthy Scriptures:

15 This verse is also a warning today for the nations that are vexing Israel. As any modern nation treats the nation of Israel, so will God deal with that nation in the same way that they have dealt with Israel. This is a particular warning for the United States not to pressure Israel to divide their land and to give the Palestinians half of Jerusalem. If this should happen, the USA will be forcibly divided as well (Zech 12:3).

17-21 These verses have been fulfilled literally with the 1982 invasion of southern Lebanon by Israel, in order to destroy the PLO stockpiles of arms and ammunition and prevent guerrilla attacks from the north of Israel. Israel retreated after a 20 year occupation, but still possesses the Golan Heights (Gilead), won in the 1967 war, which it has annexed. Israel also possessed the Gaza Strip (land of the Philistines) until 2005 when it was given up to the Palestinians. Israel still controls the commerce of Gaza, however. Verse 21 predicts that deliverers shall arise in Israel to judge the

land of Edom during the time when the Lord will establish His kingdom in Israel after His second coming.

Christ seen:

Obadiah predicts that upon Mt. Zion will be deliverance (v.17) and there shall be holiness. This prophecy is waiting to be fulfilled when the Messiah returns to Jerusalem and sets up His kingdom there. It will be a kingdom of holiness, which has never occurred until the present date.

Significance in the Old Testament:

This book shows the attitude of God in judgment against any nation that hates and harms the Jews. It agrees with the prophecy of Gen 12:3 "I will curse him that curses thee (the seed of Abraham)." Throughout history, the nations that have harmed the Jews have been destroyed; namely, Edom, Philistia, Ammon, Moab, Rome, Ottoman Empire, and Nazi Germany.

JONAH

Author: Jonah meaning “dove.” Jonah was a native of Gath-hepher, a town 3 miles north of Nazareth. Jonah was immensely patriotic and hated idolatry, which is why God’s call to preach repentance to the wicked city of Nineveh was so distasteful to him.

Setting: The time was 760 BC, during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel. Assyria, whose capital was Nineveh, was in a period of mild decline with weak rulers. Assyrian cruelty was legendary from historical records. They can be compared to the Nazis of WW2. Israel was experiencing prosperity but many sins including idolatry were rampant. There is speculation that 2 plagues in 765-759 BC and a solar eclipse in 763 BC may have prepared the hearts of the Ninevites to repent. This Assyrian capital was 500 miles N.E. of Israel by the Tigris River. It was founded by Nimrod and took three days to walk around it. It is very near the modern city of Mosul, Iraq. The walls surrounding the city were so thick, that three chariots could ride abreast on them. The walls, which were 100 ft. high, with towers an additional 100 ft. high, were also surrounded by a moat, 150 ft. wide and 60 ft. deep.

Theme: Salvation to the Gentiles. This book reveals God’s compassion, mercy, and willingness to forgive.

Survey:

- First Commission, followed by disobedience and judgment (Chapter 1).
- Prayer and praise (Chapter 2).
- Second Commission, followed by obedience, and judgment averted (Chapter 3).
- The prayer of Jonah and God’s rebuke (Chapter 4). Jonah has more concern for a plant and himself than for 120,000 people. “Do not know the difference” is an idiom (common saying) meaning they were helpless to know how to escape punishment.

Historical note: After repenting during Jonah’s visit, Nineveh slipped back into wickedness, and Nahum prophesied against the city. The city fell in 612 BC to an alliance of the Medes, Babylonians, and Scythians after a two month siege, which was 150 years after Jonah’s visit.

Noteworthy Scriptures:

Jonah’s prayer:

2:2 I cried...He heard...

2:4 I will look again...

2:7 I remembered...

2:9 I will sacrifice...I will pay...Salvation is from the Lord”.

2:10 Then the Lord commanded the fish...

3:5-9 Nineveh’s king and its people fasted and repented, and caused their farm animals to fast also. It was a very serious fast—no food or water, and both people and animals were covered with sackcloth, the symbol of mourning

4:11 God has compassion for 120,000 repentant sinners.

Christ seen:

Jonah represents Jesus as the great foreign missionary, except in his reluctance to go and his anger at God's forgiveness. He was sent to Nineveh to command repentance, even as Jesus was sent to Earth to command all nations to repent and be saved.

Significance in the Old Testament:

The book of Jonah clearly shows God's desire and mercy for all nations, not just Israel, to repent from wickedness and be saved from judgment. Since God doesn't change through the ages, this remains His desire, which was demonstrated by sending His son to save mankind through faith in His sacrifice on the cross.

MICAH

Author: Micah was a prophet to the Southern Kingdom who lived during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah. Micah is a country-man, like Amos. He was a very compassionate man who saw the suffering of the people. He denounced the oppression of the poor by the rich. He knew his calling. In Micah 3:8, he says: **On the other hand, I am filled with power - with the Spirit of the Lord – and with justice and courage to make known to Jacob his rebellious act, even to Israel his sin.** Micah is a contemporary of Isaiah, and Hosea

Setting: In 735-710 BC, Assyria, to the North is strong. The people of Nineveh, its capital, had fallen back into sin and threatened to invade Israel. Micah prophesies to Judah because of the sins of violence, bribery, covetousness, and injustice. **Because of Micah's ministry, King Hezekiah instituted reforms** (Jer.26:18,19) and the Southern Kingdom was spared judgment for several years. The Northern Kingdom, however, continued to crumble inwardly and outwardly until its collapse in 722 BC when it fell to Assyria under Sargon II.

Theme: Judgment and restoration of Judah.

Survey:

- Prediction of Judgment. Chapters 1-3
Cause of Judgment: Chapter 2:1-11
- Prediction of Restoration Chapters 4,5
- Plea for Repentance Chapter 6-7:6
- Promise of Final Salvation 7:7-20

Noteworthy Scriptures:

1:6 Micah predicts that God “will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the open country.”

2:7 “Do not My words do good, to the one walking uprightly?”

2:12-13 God says: “I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob.” Final restoration is coming.

3:8 “On the other hand I am filled with power with the Spirit of the Lord and with justice and courage.”

4:1-8 Characteristics of the Millennial Kingdom. Note that there will be multiple gods worshipped.

4:10 The fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians is predicted. Vs. 10-13 include the call to travail for yourself and your city, God's thoughts are revealed and His protection over His intercessors.

5:2 But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel...Birthplace of Jesus predicted.

5:3 ...until the time that she who travails has brought forth...This talks of Israel becoming a nation again in one day, in 1948 AD (Isa 66:8) and the return of Jewish exiles to Israel.

5:4 And He will arise and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord...Feed the messianic Jews the Word of the Lord.

5:5 And this One will be our peace.... Peace to the messianic Jews during the time of invasion.

5:5-6 These verses may have been fulfilled in 1991 AD when Gulf War I took place to free Kuwait from the invasion of Iraq under Saddam Hussein. At that time Iraq launched Scud missiles against Israel and a coalition of 7 nations freed Kuwait and invaded Iraq (Assyria) and destroyed its forces close to its borders, but did not capture the capital city Baghdad.

6:1-16 God pleads with His people to repent.

6:8 “He has told you O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

7:7 Micah says: “I will watch expectantly for the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation.”

7:18 Who is a God like Thee, who pardons iniquity... does not retain His anger forever, because He **delights in unchanging love.**

7:19 “He will have **compassion** on us He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, He will cast all their sins unto the depths of the sea.”

Christ seen:

In Micah, Christ is seen in two aspects: as the coming millennial ruler who brings peace to the Earth, and as the mighty God who pardons iniquity, forgives sins, and casts all the people’s sins into the depths of the sea, reconciling man with God.

Significance in the Old Testament:

Micah gives a picture of both advents of the Lord. His first coming is seen in 5:2 and His second coming as the glorious King of Israel in 4:1-8. The Lord is also shown as a merciful God who is ready to forgive sins and restore fellowship with His people if they meet His conditions.

NAHUM

Author: Nahum, which means “comfort,” brought good news to Judah. Most scholars believe that Nahum came from a city in southern Judah. The book concerns the destruction of Nineveh. Unlike Jonah, Nahum does not visit Nineveh to proclaim judgment; he spoke the judgment while in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Setting: This book was most likely written around 660 BC. (Jonah was written around 760 BC). Jonah’s message of repentance was heeded by the Ninevites, and the Lord forgave their sins, but soon these Assyrians fell back into great pride and cruelty. The Assyrian capital, Nineveh, was a very well fortified city; its walls were 100 ft. high and wide with towers extending 100 ft. higher than the wall. A moat 150 ft. wide and 60 ft. deep surrounded the city. Assyria was the most powerful nation from 1000-625 BC. However, Nahum predicted its fall.

Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC. Thousands of the Jews were taken captive to other lands, and people from other conquered nations were imported to the land of Israel (II Kings 17:24) and became known as Samaritans. This policy was pursued by the Assyrians to minimize the possibility of revolt, and was part of the reason why the Jews in Jesus’ time had no dealings with the Samaritans, who were foreigners.

King Sennacherib of Assyria, invaded Judah in 701 BC, but **185,000 of his troops were destroyed by the angel of the Lord in one night!** Isaiah had prophesied that Sennacherib would retreat (II Kings 19:20-35).

Nahum mentions the fall of the city of Thebes in Egypt which fell in 663 BC to the Assyrians under Ashurbanipal II. Nineveh actually fell to a coalition of Babylonians and Medes in 612 BC. The Tigris River overflowed and part of the city wall dissolved so the enemy could invade.

Theme: Destruction of Nineveh and vengeance on Assyria

Survey with Significant Scriptures:

- Destruction of Nineveh predicted and described
 - 1:8 The end will come with a flood.
 - 1:10 The city will be burned.
 - 1:9 The city will not rise again.
 - 2:6-8 The palace will dissolve and the leaders will flee.
- The reason for the destruction:
 - 3:1 Nineveh was a bloody city, full of lies and those who pillage.
 - 3:4 Nineveh was full of harlotries and sorceries.
 - 3:8-11 The destruction would be similar to the destruction of Thebes, Egypt.
- Words of comfort to Judah.
 - 1:3 “The Lord is slow to anger and great in power.”
 - 1:7 “The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble.”
 - 1:15 “Behold on the mountains the feet of those who bring good news.”

Christ seen :

In Nahum, the Lord is seen as the avenger of His people (Rom 12:19). We are not to avenge ourselves, but the Lord will take up our cause and fight for us. He will destroy our enemies. This is not to say that we should not resist evil if we have the power to resist, but our ultimate victory comes from the Lord in whom we trust. In the book of Nahum, the people of Judah had no power to resist Assyria.

Significance in the Old Testament:

The book of Nahum shows that evil nations who are cruel to God's people do not go unpunished forever, but their destruction is assured by the Lord. This confirms God's words to Abraham that He would curse those who cursed Abraham and his seed (Gen 12:3).

HABAKKUK

Author: Habakkuk means embrace or cling. Habakkuk identifies himself as a prophet (3:1). He was probably a musician and most likely connected to temple worship. He was not afraid to write about his discussion with God. He increases in understanding of the person, power and plans of God. **It is also noteworthy that he records his vision.** He concludes his message in a marvelous psalm of praise and trust.

Setting: The time was probably 607AD during the reign of Jehoiakin as the king of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, because God shows him about the destruction of Jerusalem. The Babylonians first invaded the S. Kingdom in 605 BC. This kingdom had reformed under the warnings from Hezekiah and Josiah, but had lapsed back into unfaithfulness. In 605 B.C. 10,000 Jewish leaders were deported to Babylon after Jerusalem surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar.

Theme: The just shall live by faith.

Survey with Noteworthy Scriptures:

I. Problems of Habakkuk:

A. First problem: 1:1-4 How can a holy God let Judah's sins go unpunished?
God's answer: 1:5-11 God will use Babylon to judge Judah.

B. Second problem: 1:12-2:1. How can a righteous God use a nation more wicked than Judah to punish Judah?

God's answer: 2:2-20. Babylon will be spoiled and plundered by the nations and covered with violence herself.

2:2-3 God tells Habakkuk to write down the vision (of chapter 3) so he that reads it may run with it and tell others about it.

2:4 **The just shall live by faith.** Also Rom. 1:17, Gal. 3:11, Heb 10:38. "Shall live" is "chah-yah" in Hebrew meaning to stay alive, be preserved, flourish, enjoy life, live in happiness, restoration, breath, be animated, recover health and live continuously. This was the cornerstone of the Reformation in 1517 AD.

2:14 The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (floor).

II. Praise of Habakkuk (Vision of God destroying the wicked and saving His people 3:1-15)

3:1-4 Prayer for mercy, remembrance of His glory. He praises God for His power, chariots of **salvation**.

3:13 Thou doest go forth for the **salvation** of thy people, thine anointed.

3:16 I must wait quietly for the day of distress. (He knew judgment was coming.)

3:17-19 He praises and trusts in God's **salvation** even though natural things look bad.

3:18 I will rejoice (joy) "geel" in Hebrew, this includes dancing, and leaping for joy.

Christ seen:

Habakkuk represents Evangelist Jesus pleading for revival. The Father sent Jesus; Jesus sends us. He is the Evangelist who pleads for revival. Jesus said: “...*Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.*” (John 4:35)

Significance in the Old Testament:

This book emphasizes that **the Just shall live by their faith**. Habakkuk not only reveals this truth for the first time, but by personal example shows how this is done when the situation looks the worst. The Christian is the just one, justified by the blood of Jesus. God lives by faith (Rom 4:17), and Jesus lives by faith (Heb 10:12-13). So must we live by faith.

ZEPHANIAH

Author: Zephaniah was from the godly line of King Hezekiah of Judah, therefore a prophet of royal descent (Zeph. 1:1). He was a contemporary of Jeremiah and Habakkuk. He spoke during the early years of the reign of King Josiah, when the sins of Manasseh and Amon still were being practiced. Zephaniah's ministry may have prepared Judah for the revivals under King Josiah.

Setting: Manasseh and Amon, descendants of Hezekiah, were very evil kings. They reinstated idol worship. Manasseh, however, did repent in his later years after he was taken captive to Babylon (II Chron 33:11-13). Josiah, Amon's son, came to the throne at age eight, and ruled for 31 years 640-609BC. The first reform took place in 628 BC (II Chron. 34:31-33) when he tore down the altars of Baal, destroyed the foreign incense altars, and broke the Asherim images.

In 622 BC Hilkiah, the priest, found the Book of the Law in the temple and King Josiah instituted more reforms. Josiah renewed a covenant with the Lord and had the temple repaired (II Kings 22-23). Judgment was stayed for 31 years while Josiah ruled. However these reforms were too little and too late, for the people reverted to gross idolatry soon after King Josiah died.

Theme: The Day of the Lord's anger, judgment and restoration. God is holy and must vindicate His righteousness by calling all the nations of the world into account before Him. No one escapes from His authority and dominion. Yet, God promises blessing of joy and hope for His people.

Survey and Noteworthy Scriptures (bold):

- **Judgment in the Day of the Lord**

1:2-3 God will completely remove all things from the face of the land of Israel.

This is the same expression used concerning Noah's flood. It will be accomplished by a "flood of people" (Babylonians). The future destruction of the Earth will be done by fire (II Peter 3:7,10, Zeph 1:18). The coming judgment of Judah is a figure of the judgment of all nations at the Lord's second coming.

1:5-12 Judgment on Judah because of idol worship, corrupt leaders, violence, deceit and complacency.

2:3 Call to repentance. Seek the Lord, righteousness and humility.

2:6-7 Future restoration is coming. God will restore a remnant

2:5-14 Judgment against other nations: Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Ethiopia, and the Assyrians (Nineveh will be desolate)

3:1-4 Judgment on Jerusalem.

3:5 The Lord's justice. Every morning He brings His justice to light.

3:8 Judgment on the whole Earth. All the Earth will be devoured.

- **Salvation in the Day of the Lord**

3:9 People will have purified lips and will speak righteousness.

3:14 Shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem. Rejoice Heb. "aw laz" Jump for joy. Exult, triumph with all your heart.

3:15 The King, the Lord of Israel, is in your midst!

3:17 The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy. He will be quiet in His love. He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy!

Christ seen:

Zephaniah shows that He is the Lord, mighty to save (3:17). He not only is able to save us from physical harm and destruction, but is also able to save us from the control of sin over our lives. He has already saved the Believer from eternal death and Hell, and has given him victory over sin and the world and the devil, because “*Greater is He who is within you than he that is in the world.*” (I John 4:4)

Significance in the Old Testament:

God’s faithfulness to His people is emphasized in Zephaniah. Despite the coming judgment for unrepentant sin, a remnant will be preserved by God, will be purified from sin, will speak purity and righteousness, will live in a peaceful land, and will be praised and honored by other nations.

HAGGAI

Author: Haggai. This man worked with Zechariah in encouraging the rebuilding of the temple. Haggai returned from Babylon with the remnant under Zerubbabel in 536 BC and evidently lived in Jerusalem. He was probably born in Babylon and was about 75 years old when he prophesied this message.

Setting: The Babylonian empire had fallen to the Medes and Persians in 539 BC and King Cyrus, the Persian, had issued a decree for the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the temple. The first return to Jerusalem was led by Zerubbabel in 536 BC. The work on the temple began but was stopped because of strong opposition by the Samaritans who were envious of the special privilege King Cyrus had granted them. In 520 BC, God called Haggai and Zechariah to stir up the people to finish the temple. The building had been neglected for 15 years while the people built their own homes. Haggai was given this prophesy during a space of four months in 520 BC.

Theme: Rebuild the temple (put God first).

Survey and Noteworthy Scriptures (in bold):

- 1st Message:
 - 1:4 Rebuke of the people for building their own homes first.
 - 1:7 **Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways.**
 - 1:5-11 Reasons for little harvest, holes in purses and drought
 - 1:14 The Lord stirred up Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the remnant of the people and they resumed the work on the temple.
- 2nd Message:
 - 2:4 “Take courage,” 3X “for I am with you.”
 - 2:6 **There will be a shaking of the heavens, earth, sea and land. (Tribulation time and even now.)**
 - 2:7 Wealth will come and His house will be filled with glory.
 - 2:9 **The glory of this latter house will be greater than the former and peace will come.** This is looking forward to the millennial temple. Actually, before the building of the millennial temple, the scripture here looks forward to the temple of the bodies of Believers in the Messiah, who will have the glory of Messiah dwelling within them. This is the glory that will bring peace to their temple.
- 3rd Message:
 - 2:11-14 Holiness is demanded. Haggai rebuked them for not separating holy things from unholy things. He reminded them that as long as they were disobedient and self-willed, even their sacrifices were profane and unacceptable to God.
 - 2:15-19 Promise to bless the seed and the fruit as a result of obedience.
- 4th Message:
 - 2:21-23 Encouragement to Zerubbabel: Nations and armies will be overthrown and Zerubbabel will be like a signet ring (token of delegated authority. Pharaoh gave Joseph a ring and King Ahasuerus gave a ring to Mordecai.)

Christ seen:

In Haggai, the Lord is seen as the restorer of the lost heritage. Even as the rebuilding of the temple represents the regaining of the lost worship experience in Jerusalem, the Lord, by His sacrifice on the cross, and through faith in Him, has restored the gifts given to Adam, which he lost in the Fall of Man. These gifts are:

1. Having the spiritual and moral likeness of God
2. Having understanding of and communication with God
3. Having the power of dominion over the Earth

Significance in the Old Testament:

The rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem signifies that the loss of Israel's relationship with God through sin, can not only be regained, but made much more glorious by returning to God through repentance and by putting Him first in life. As a historical note, the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem was filled with the glory of Messiah Jesus as He often taught the Word of God in it.

ZECHARIAH

Author: Zechariah, whose name means “*The Lord Remembers*,” was a contemporary of Haggai and served in a similar way, to arouse the Jews to complete the Temple in Jerusalem. He was the grandson of Iddo the prophet, and began to prophesy in 520 BC. He belonged to the Great Synagogue that collected and preserved the scripture.

Setting: Persia was the world power, and about 17 years earlier, King Cyrus II of Persia had given the order to the Jews to return to Judea and to build the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. They had begun to do this, but the Samaritans had hindered them for about 15 years, while Cyrus had been fighting the Parthians, who finally killed him in battle in 530 BC. Other Persian kings took the throne for brief periods until the reign of Darius I. Finally, Haggai and Zechariah began to prophesy to the people to continue to build the Temple. This was in the 2nd year of Darius. Haggai’s message was concerned with the Temple and the religious life of the people. Zechariah’s message dealt with the future of the nation of Israel and its political life.

Theme: Future blessing for Israel, and Messiah’s two Comings.

Survey: Zechariah is the major *Minor Prophet*, second only to Isaiah in Messianic passages. He emphasizes the history of Israel during the period of Gentile domination. He uses 8 visions, an object lesson, 4 messages, and 2 burdens. Chapters 1-8 were written from 520-516 BC while the Temple was being rebuilt, while chapters 9-14 were probably written between 480 and 470 BC.

A. Eight Visions: (Chapters 1-6)

1. The man (angel) among the myrtle trees (1:7-17).

The horsemen represent angels who watch over Israel and the other nations and report to the Lord about Israel’s bad treatment by those nations, causing the Lord to promise future prosperity for Israel and Jerusalem.

2. The 4 horns and 4 builders (1:18-21)

The 4 horns represent nations which have oppressed Israel, and the 4 builders represent the nations which have destroyed these oppressors and delivered Israel.

OPPRESSORS

SYRIA
ASSYRIA
BABYLON
PHILISTIA

BUILDERS

ASSYRIA (TIGLATH-PILESER III)
MEDIA (CYAXARES THE MEDE)
PERSIA (CYRUS II)
GREECE (ALEXANDER THE GREAT)

TIME

732 BC
612 BC
539 BC
332 BC

3. The man (angel) with the measuring line (Chapter 2)

This vision means that in the future, the Lord will prosper and grow Jerusalem far beyond its present boundaries so that its suburbs extend far beyond its walls. This prophecy has already been fulfilled.

4. The cleansing of Joshua the High Priest (Chapter 3)

Joshua represents Israel, which will be cleansed and the priesthood restored to give service to the BRANCH, the Messiah, when he comes. Messiah is the stone upon which shall be the 7 eyes (Holy Spirit), and he will remove the iniquity of Israel in one day (by the Cross).

5. The golden lamp-stand (menorah) and the two olive trees (Chapter 4)

The golden lamp-stand represents Israel, the golden oil represents the Holy Spirit, and the two olive trees represent the 2 Israeli prophets Enoch and Elijah through whom the Holy Spirit was ministered to Israel, and in the Last Days become the 2 witnesses of Revelation 11:4.

6. The flying scroll (5:1-4)

The flying scroll is the swift judgment or curse of God upon those who steal and those who swear falsely (lie). The scroll entering into their houses and consuming them, refers not only to their physical houses, but also to their descendants (House of ____).

7. The woman and the ephah (5:5-11)

This vision is difficult to understand because of an apparent error in translation. In the Hebrew language, the word for **woman** and the word for **fire** are identical. Translators chose to use *woman*, but if *fire* is used, in the context of today, it is a frightening prophecy. An ephah is a large dry measure, about 29 quarts in size, which is too small to hold a woman. Using the word *fire*, the fire is cast into the middle of the ephah, and is called “wickedness.” Then a talent of lead is put over the fire, covering it. This is a representation of an atomic bomb, which the prophets never dreamed of. Then two *fires* picked up the ephah, and they had wings like a stork and they flew the ephah to the land of Shinar (Iraq). This represents a cruise missile having two engines (fires) and thin wings like the US “Snark” missile built in the 1960s. The nuclear missile will be set up in Iraq as a threat to the nation of Israel.

8. The 4 chariots (6:1-8)

This meaning of this vision is that God’s judgment will descend on the nations. The chariots came from between two mountains of brass (judgment). The chariots are driven by angels of course. The colors of the horses are significant. Red represents war, black represents famine, and white represents a conqueror that is coming. The north country refers to Russia. The same horse colors are seen in Revelation 6:2-6.

B. An Object Lesson

The crowning of Joshua (6:9-15). This crowning of Joshua the High Priest was actually performed. Joshua represented the Messiah Jesus at His second coming, when He takes His place in Jerusalem as both King and High Priest of His people. The crowns represent the kingly and priestly offices that He holds. He will build the temple of the Lord. This refers to the temple of Ephesians 2:19-22. It is a spiritual temple of believers, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit dwelling within each believer, who is a living stone (IPet2:5). Those who are far off from Christ now, will be converted and will also build in this spiritual temple.

C. The 4 Messages (Chapters 7-8)

The question: Should Israel keep the new fasts which the people had begun in Babylon, since the temple had been destroyed (7:1-3)? The Lord’s answer follows:

1. The Lord rebuked ritual fasts and said that they didn't have to do them (7:4-7).

FAST10TH TEBETH9TH TAMMUZ10TH AB1ST TISHRI**REMEMBERING**

JUDAH INVADED BY BABYLON (JER 52:4)

JERUSALEM BROKEN UP (JER 39:2)

JERUSALEM BURNED (JER 52:12)

GEDALIAH (PUPPET RULER) KILLED (JER 41:1)

2. The Lord reminded the people of past disobedience causing His judgment (7:8-14).
3. The Lord will restore and console Jerusalem and dwell there Himself (8:1-8).
4. The new fast days should be days of joy, gladness, and feasting (8:19).

D. The 2 Burdens (Chapters 9-14))

1. 1st Burden: (Chapters 9-11) Messiah's 1st coming and rejection by Israel.
 - a. The Grecian oppression (Chapters 9-10)
 - 1) Philistia will be destroyed (9:1-8). Alexander the Great did it (332 BC).
 - 2) Messiah's triumphal entry into Jerusalem (9:9)
 - 3) Prophecy of Messiah's kingly reign (9:10-17)
 - 4) Prophecy of the re-gathering of Israel, and return to their land (Ch. 10)
 - b. The Roman oppression (Chapter 11)
 - 1) Many of the Jews will be destroyed by the Romans (11:1-6).
 - 2) God breaks His staffs of Beauty and Bands (11:7-14)
 - 3) Messiah rejected by Israel (11:12-13).
 - 4) The false shepherd (antichrist) appears in the Last Days (11:15-17)
2. 2nd Burden: (Chapters 12-14) Messiah's 2nd coming and acceptance by Israel
 - a. Gentile nation's siege of Jerusalem and their defeat (12:1-10). See EZE 38.
 - b. Jews recognize Messiah; repent from their sins (12:11-14). See EZE 39:22
 - c. A fountain will be opened for sin and uncleanness (13:1-2)
 - d. Idolatry and false prophecy shall cease (13:3-7)
 - e. Israel decimated, but refined as gold, and made to be God's people (13:8-9)
 - f. Jerusalem again besieged by Gentiles; Messiah returns to fight for Israel (14:1-8). Also there is a major change in Israel's land (14:4-11).
 - g. The weapon of this last battle is described (14:12-15). It is a neutron bomb.
 - h. Messiah's reign over all the Earth described (14:16-21)

Noteworthy Scriptures:

3:7 If we will walk in God's ways and keep His charge, then we shall judge His house and keep His courts, and He will give us a place to stand next to Him.

4:6 ..Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts.

6:15 And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord (spiritual temple).

9:9 Here is the triumphal entry of Messiah Jesus into Jerusalem.

10:11 This prophecy of the people of Israel returning to their land by passing through the sea, was fulfilled in 1945-1948 AD when Britain hindered their return on the Mediterranean Sea.

11:12 This refers to the betrayal of Messiah Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

11:13 This verse refers to the betrayal price being used to buy the Potter's Field for a burial place for strangers (Mt 27:7).

12:3 God says that all the nations that burden themselves with Jerusalem shall be cut in pieces. This is a solemn warning to the United States of America.

13:7 This prophecy refers to Messiah Jesus being crucified and His followers scattered.

13:8 In the war of chapter 12, two-thirds of the people of Israel will be killed, and one part will survive to call on the name of the Lord.

14:12 The description of the effect of the weapons used in the war of chapter 14 seems to describe the neutron bomb quite well.

14:16 The armies of the nations are destroyed at Armageddon, but their families at home survive to worship the Lord and keep the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem.

Christ seen:

In Zechariah, Christ is seen as the fountain opened to the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness (13:1) He is also seen in 9:9, 11:12, and 13:7

Significance in the Old Testament:

Zechariah encouraged the Jews to look forward to the coming of Messiah and His governmental reign over Israel and over the other nations. Despite Israel's lack of power in Zechariah's day, they would become a powerful nation again, and Messiah would administer His righteous rule from Jerusalem.

MALACHI

Author: Malachi means *My Messenger*. Nothing is known of Malachi, but Jewish tradition says that he was a member of the Great Synagogue that collected and preserved the canon of revealed Scripture. From reading his book, we believe that he really was concerned about God's honor and the destiny of God's chosen people.

Setting: When this book was written 432-425 BC, the Persian Empire was the most powerful of the kingdoms. The temple had been built by the Jews who returned, but instead of learning from their captivity in Babylon, and turning wholeheartedly to the Lord, the Jews soon slipped back into pride and corruption. The priests especially became corrupt. The tithes and offerings were not given, and intermarriage with pagans was allowed. Nehemiah had rebuked them earlier, but he had gone back to the King of Persia. Malachi appeals to the Jews backslidden condition.

Theme: Appeal to backsliders to turn away from their corrupt practices and turn to God.

Survey with Noteworthy Scriptures (in bold):

- The Lord's love for Israel.
1:1-3 God says: "I have loved you." Cynicism and ungratefulness reigns.
- Failure of the priests: They despised the name of the Lord.
1:7-8 They presented defiled food and the lame and blind animals as sacrifices.
1:11 God's name will be great among the nations.
2:1-8 The priests did not do their job. Judgment begins at the house of God (I Peter 4:17).
Malachi reminds them of their job description. Their job was: to honor His name, instruct in the law, be righteous, walk with God in peace, turn many from iniquity, preserve knowledge and speak messages from the Lord of Hosts. I Peter 2:9 But you are a royal priesthood, a holy nation – proclaim His excellencies.
- Unfaithfulness of the people.
2:10-16 They profaned the covenant and dealt treacherously. Treacherous in Hebrew means, to break covenant, unfaithful, deceitful, offending. They divorced their wives.
- The day of judgment:
3:1 **The messenger of the covenant was coming, and would sit as a refiner's fire, and would purify the sons of Levi.**
3:5 He is coming for judgment against sorcerers, adulterers, etc.
- Blessing in giving
3:6 **"I am the Lord, I do not change."**
3:10-11 Tithes and offerings were required for blessing. Devourer rebuked.
- The destiny of the righteous and the wicked.
3:13 The words of the people were arrogant, harsh.
3:16 **A book of remembrance was written of those who fear the Lord and speak often of Him.**
- The great Day of the Lord.
4:2 **The sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings.**
4:5 Elijah, the prophet is coming to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.

Christ seen:

The messenger of the covenant is none other than the Christ Jesus himself. He is also the sun of righteousness who shall arise with healing in His wings. (In 3:1, “my messenger” refers to John the Baptist, who was mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 11:10.) The sun of righteousness shall arise with great power in the “Last Days,” and mighty healings will be manifested through His people, those who fear His name.

Significance in the Old Testament:

Malachi was written in order to prepare Israel for the appearance of the Messiah, the messenger of the covenant. When he arrives, the sins against the family, sins of not tithing and offering, and sins of the priesthood would be openly exposed. Supernatural healing would be demonstrated during His ministry, and those who believed in Him would grow up to spiritual maturity until the great and awesome Day of the Lord, the second coming of the Messiah in power.

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