

# STUDIES IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

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THE OLD TESTAMENT (39 BOOKS)

JEWISH OLD TESTAMENT (24 BOOKS)

THE LAW

(5)

- GENESIS
- EXODUS
- LEVITICUS
- NUMBERS
- DEUT.

THE LAW  
(TORAH)

- GENESIS
- EXODUS
- LEVITICUS
- NUMBERS
- DEUT.

HISTORY

(12)

- JOSHUA
- JUDGES
- RUTH
- 1 SAMUEL
- 2 SAMUEL
- 1 KINGS
- 2 KINGS
- 1 CHRON.
- 2 CHRON.
- EZRA
- NEH.
- ESTHER

PROPHETS

POETRY

(5)

- JOB
- PSALMS
- PROV.
- ECCL.
- SONG SOL.

- JOSHUA
- JUDGES
- SAMUEL
- KINGS
- ISAIAH
- JER.
- EZEKIEL
- MIN. PROPH.

WRITINGS

MAJOR  
PROPHETS

(5)

- ISAIAH
- JEREMIAH
- LAM.
- EZEKIEL
- DANIEL

MINOR  
PROPHETS

(12)

- HOSEA
- JOEL
- AMOS
- OBADIAH
- JONAH
- MICAH
- NAHUM
- HAB.
- ZEPH.
- HAGGAI
- ZECH.
- MALACHI

- PSALMS
- PROV.
- JOB
- SONG SOL.
- RUTH
- LAM.
- ECCL.
- ESTHER
- DANIEL
- EZRA/NEH.
- CHRON.

# **Periods of the Prophets**

## **IN ISRAEL**

## **IN JUDAH**

### **The Assyrian Period (before 625 B.C.)**

**Elijah (870)**

**Elisha (850)**

**Joel (c. 800)**

**Jonah (790) to Assyria**

**Amos (775)**

**Hosea (750)**

**Isaiah (740)**

**Micah (725)**

**Nahum (650) of Assyria**

### **The Babylonian Period (625-539 B.C.)**

#### **Before Captivity**

**Zephaniah (625)**

**Jeremiah (612)**

**Habakkuk (607) of Babylon**

#### **During Captivity**

**Daniel (596)**

**Ezekiel (593)**

**Obadiah (585) of Edom**

### **The Persian Period (539-331 B.C.)**

#### **After Captivity**

**Haggai (520)**

**Zeehariah (520)**

**Malachi (425)**

## STUDIES IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

### INTRODUCTION

"A study of the prophets will enrich the life of anyone who applies himself to learn their teaching; it can only confuse those who would use their teaching as a basis on which to speculate about the future. An understanding of their teaching concerning the Messiah Who was to come, will strengthen the faith of anyone who sees those predictions fulfilled in the New Covenant. An understanding of the political, social, moral and religious corruption will give courage to the Lord's faithful today. The consequences of Israel's disobedience and an understanding of the principles on which God dealt with that disobedience, will help one better to read the signs of the times. The reading of one's newspaper, secular magazines, and listening to news reports of present-day world events will take on new significance to him."

"This does not mean that one is to see God foretelling any specific event of today, or that He has in mind certain individuals of today. It means that one will come to see the principles upon which God dealt with the conditions of that day, and, on the ground of faith in God's immutability, he may conclude that God will act accordingly today."

Homer Hailey

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The messages were relevant to the moral and religious situation of that, but their message will never be out of date.

1. Men still trust in material strength;
2. Men still delight in wealth and luxury;
3. Men still forget God;
4. Men still lie, kill, steal, sin;
5. Oppression and injustice are still in style.

Consider ***Romans 15:4*** - "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope."

All but ***Obadiah*** and ***Nahum*** are quoted, or alluded to, in the New Testament.

## STUDIES IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

### INTRODUCTION

#### THE "MAJOR" PROPHETS:

ISAIAH - The "Messianic" Prophet (66 chapters)  
JEREMIAH - The "Weeping" Prophet (52 chapters)  
EZEKIEL - The "Graphic" Prophet (48 chapters)  
DANIEL - The "Captive" Prophet (12 chapters)

THE "MINOR" PROPHETS: In pre-exilic times the book of Jonah was written to Nineveh; Amos, Hosea and Joel were written to Israel; Obadiah wrote to Edom; Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah wrote to Judah.

During the post-exilic days the books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi were written.

**HOSEA** - A prophet of the northern kingdom, but made occasional reference to Judah. He began his ministry when Israel was at the peak of power. Hosea writes to Israel's idolatry, wickedness and future captivity. (14 chapters)

**JOEL** and **ZEPHANIAH** - Prophets of coming judgment. In Joel we have the coming day of God, a prophecy of the gospel age and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Zephaniah tells of the great day of God. (Joel - 3 chapters; Zephaniah - 3 chapters)

**AMOS** - Commissioned to the northern kingdom, yet gave attention also to Judah. His messages concluded by predicting the judgment of God upon Judah and Israel. The Lord reproved the nation for disloyalty and revealed that because of their exceeding sinfulness they could not be secure. (9 chapters)

**OBADIAH** - The doom of Edom. (1 chapter)

**JONAH** - Sent on an errand of mercy to Nineveh. (4 chapters)

**MICAH** - Contemporary of Isaiah and labored in the rural districts. The Messiah's first appearance is dealt with in Micah 3-5. Micah prophesied of the impending fall of Israel and Judah, lamented the prevailing treachery and violence but closed with a vision of future national supremacy. (7 chapters)

**NAHUM** - About 150 years after Jonah, Nahum gives a message of doom to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire which had destroyed Israel. (3 chapters)

**HABAKKUK** - Realized God was raising up the Chaldean empire to correct the Jewish nation. Knowing how ruthless and wicked the Chaldeans were, he asked how God could use such a degenerate race to punish the Hebrews who, though sinful, were on a higher plane than the Babylonians. God replied that He had a purpose in it all, and when that was accomplished the Chaldean empire would be destroyed. (3 chapters)

**HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH** and **MALACHI** - They were contemporary with Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther in the post-exilic period, as also indicated by the content of their messages. Haggai's book has to do with the rebuilding of the temple. Zechariah's prophecy is along the same lines with visions of the coming Messiah and His kingdom. Malachi brings the final Old Testament message to a disobedient nation. (Haggai - 2 chapters; Zechariah - 14 chapters; Malachi - 4 chapters)



**HOSEA**  
**THE PROPHET OF LOVE**

**HOSEA:** "Salvation" "Help" "Deliverance" - It was Joshua's name before it was changed. Consider Numbers 13:8,16.

**DATE:** 750-725 BC - During the time of Jereboam II. Also about 5 years following Amos. Hosea was contemporary with Amos and Jonah.

**HOME:** Uncertain. From the book we learn he is well acquainted with the soil. He also has an unusually high conception of the duty of the priesthood in the area of popular education. Hosea looks upon the Priest as in a large measure responsible for the morals of the people.

**CHARACTERISTICS:**

Deeply emotional in nature; often called the "weeping prophet of Israel;" His favorite expression is "loving-kindness;" The earliest book in which religion is interpreted absolutely in terms of love (Knudson); Contains variety in thought; Has intense feelings; One of the most difficult, as well as the most evangelical of the Old Testament; A message of doom to Israel, while also a message of the righteousness of God; Condemnation of corrupt worship.

**BACKGROUND:**

Israel is indicted for "whoredom." Israel prostituted herself before the lovers of the land for hire (2:12,13).

- (1) Religiously - no knowledge of God;
- (2) Morally - corrupted;
- (3) Politically - turned from God to seek alliances.

**MESSAGE:** "God is Love." The emphasis is on religious corruption.

**KEY VERSES:**

3:1; 6:4; 10:12; 11:3,8; 14:4

**KEY WORDS:** Know; Mercy; Hear; Love; Return; Israel (44x); Ephraim (37x); Judah (15x); I will; Of Jehovah (57x)

**OUTLINE:** The Messenger (1-3) [Adulterous Wife and Faithful Husband]  
The Message (4-14) [Adulterous People and Faithful Lord]

Complaint; Condemnation; Consolation  
Preparation (1-3); Prophecy (4-14)



JOEL  
THE PROPHET OF PENTECOST

JOEL: "Jehovah Is God" - a common name of the Old Testament. One of the earliest writing prophets. Joel was a pious, Godly, courageous preacher, and a very distinct personality.

OCCUPATION:  
Possibly a Priest, or the son of a Priest.

HOME: Very probably a native of Judah (Jerusalem).

DATE: Various dates assigned from 900 BC to 400 BC. Although most commentators assign a later date, I believe it to be dated about 830 BC.

OCCASION: The call to repentance using a locust invasion. "Unless thee is repentance and righteousness of life on the part of the nation, the locust will be followed by a stronger, more severe judgment, an invasion by the nations." (Hailey)

MESSAGE: The coming judgments upon Judah for their sins; exhortation to repentance; Doom of the nation, and ultimate glory of God and of His cause; The urgent call for repentance; The sovereignty of God; Judgment to come; Promise of the Holy Spirit.

CHARACTERISTICS:  
No mention of idolatry, or the "high places" - No prophet dwells so little upon the moral conditions; Specific sins are not mentioned and condemned; Very graphic; One of the most disturbing and heart-searching books of the Old Testament; Careful, detailed and exquisite; Smooth, vivid; A "literary gem" of the Old Testament; Either quoted by, or quotes Isaiah, Amos, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Obadiah, Ezekiel, Malachi (27 out of 73 verses are paralleled in these prophets); Written in rhythmical, elegant, impassioned style.

OUTLINE: Joel Speaks (1:1-2:17)  
Jehovah Speaks (2:18-3:21)

Devastation [Sign of Judgment]	1:1-2:11
Supplication [Call of Repentance]	2:12-17
Restoration [vision of Blessing]	2:18-3:21

LESSONS: The necessity and need of repentance  
Disasters serve to turn men to God, and prepare their minds to hear  
Judgment day can be a day of terror, or a day of blessing



AMOS  
THE PROPHET OF JUSTICE

AMOS           “Burden Bearer.” The first great reformer. Not a “professional” prophet, but chosen of God (7:14,15). A stern prophet of justice and righteousness.

HOME:           Tekoa, a town of Judah, 6 miles south of Bethlehem, and 12 miles north of Jerusalem. A wild, desert country.

OCCUPATION  
Shepherd and “dresser” of Sycamore trees.

DATE:           765 - 750 BC (c. 755 BC)

BACKGROUND:  
The 8th Century - a period of great prosperity for both Israel and Judah. Two major perils threatened both sections - Moral and religious corruption, due to a wrong conception of the character of God; - The successes of the Assyrians, which were to the great mass of people an evidence of the superiority of the Assyrian gods, and might lead to apostasy from Jehovah.

In this period came the four prophets - Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. All of them emphasized the universality of Jehovah and His power, and they declared that the successes of the Assyrians were not due to Jehovah's weakness, but due to the people's sins. All of these prophets sought to impress the people with a more adequate conception of the character of the True God, each emphasizing that phase of the divine character which he considered best adapted to his day and generation.

The great need of the people in Israel in the 8th Century before Christ was that the heathen elements which had crept into their life and worship in the course of centuries should be eliminated. And what they tried to do was to emphasize the law as given by Moses. Foremost they taught that God was a God of Righteousness, and that as such He cared nothing for outward rites and ceremonies apart from a true heart, and holy living.

Luxury and wealth of the people are often mentioned by Amos. Morally, the people were corrupt.

MESSAGE:   “Doom” - Repent or Perish

CHARACTERISTICS:  
Amos might be called “the first great reformer.” He was not of the school of the prophets, who, by this time, were disposed to cry what the people wanted, but he was chosen of God. There was not the sympathy, love and feeling of the statesman or citizen, but a cold sense of justice and right. His very attitude breathes the desert air of his life's environment. He was the

AMOS  
THE PROPHET OF JUSTICE

stern prophet of justice and righteousness. Amos was God's prophet to a prosperous Israel steeped in religiosity, immorality and complacency.

The book is of high literary merit, the language is pure, readable, clear, forceful and dramatic; It is vivid, uses color, metaphors, sarcasm, irony, parallelism, imagery, eloquent contrasts and poetry; It is full of passion and power; It is quoted twice in the New Testament; There is no reference to the man Amos in any other Bible book.

OUTLINE: Judgment Against The Nations (1,2)  
Crimes of Israel (3-6)  
Visions of Judgment (4-9)

The *Vigilance* of The Prophet (1,2)  
The *Voice* of The Prophet (3-6)  
The *Visions* of The Prophet (7-9)

LESSONS: The nature of God - Ruler of the earth  
The peril of privilege (3:2)  
Justice is elemental (2:6b-8)  
The lessons of thoughtless concern (6:1-6)  
The kind of worship that insults God (5:21-24)  
Men displease God by hollow, insincere worship

"Our solemn assemblies may still be despised by Yahweh. Whenever mere ritual and form are allowed to take the place of filial communion with God and moral obedience, our worship will be as lightly esteemed by Him as was the worship of Israel long ago, and our sanctuaries will fall, as did the ancient high places. Our churches will be empty, their services despised, and the heart and mind of men will turn for sustenance elsewhere." (ISBE, page 53)

OBADIAH  
THE PROPHET OF DISAPPROVAL

OBADIAH    “Servant of Jehovah” “Worshiper of Jehovah” No personal history is known of Obadiah. There are several Obadiah’s in the Old Testament. The name appears 20 times representing 13 different persons.

DATE:        850 BC to 312 BC (Probable dates of 845 BC or 586 BC)

CHARACTERISTICS:

Either the earliest, or one of the latest of the prophets. It is the only book in the Old Testament with one chapter. It is also the shortest book in the Old Testament. It is never quoted, or alluded to in the New Testament. It is brief, brilliant and prophetic, vigorous, colorful, with striking comparisons.

OCCASION:    A calamity falling upon Israel has been aggravated by the malignant rejoicing of her neighbor enemy, Edom. Israel is comforted in the thought of a future in which Edom will suffer judgment in her turn, and the kingdom will be the Lord’s.

THEME:        The coming desolation and destruction of the nation of Edom. Edom is doomed, but Israel shall be restored and blessed because “The Savior shall come up on Mt. Zion to judge the Mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be Jehovah’s.”

OUTLINE:      Ruin (1-9)  
Reason (10-14)  
Retribution (15-20)  
Restoration (21)

LESSONS:     God is never unmindful of the actions of the enemies who take advantage of His people

the strong denunciation of indifference of the one who stands aloof in the hour of distress and calamity without lifting a hand to help his brother.

Human defenses are helpless in the sight of God

The warnings against enmity, hatred, envy and unbrotherly conduct

God is in active control of every phase of His creation

Ridicule is always bad because it reveals a low ego and lack of love

Human pride leads to destruction

OBADIAH  
THE PROPHET OF DISAPPROVAL

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man

Sometimes indifference leads to active participation in that which is wrong



JONAH  
THE PROPHET OF UNIVERSALITY

JONAH: "Dove" - Apparently a popular preacher of the kingdom, 2 Kings 14:25. He loved his people and his land, but also was a willful, strong and impulsive person. Jonah showed unusual power with influence on those who heard him. He was self-willed, Godly, courageous, prayerful, bigoted and selfish.

DATE: 783 - 743 BC

MESSAGE: God is an Universal God interested in man's salvation

CHARACTERISTICS:

Ingenious mode of narration; dramatic strength; the most familiar story in the Old Testament; made use of and verified by Jesus. It is one of the "contested" books by those of higher criticism. Interpreted in at least three forms: (1) "Mystical" - pure fiction; imaginary person and an imaginary experience; (2) "Allegorical" - parable prepared for didactic uses, i.e., "Jonah" is a type of Israel and the "fish" represents the Israelites in captivity; (3) "Historical" - facts are true.

SETTING: It was a time of success and luxury for the people of Israel. The people of Israel were not disposed to think in friendly terms of their neighbors. The Israelites were narrow, selfish, nationalistic people. Israel was God's chosen people, and no one in Israel had any love for the people of Ninevah.

OUTLINE: Running *From* God (1)  
Running *To* God (2)  
Running *With* God (3)  
Running *Ahead of* God (4)

LESSONS: In the hour of distress one turns to the God he has grieved  
It is futile to resist the will of God  
God seeks the salvation of all people  
God is limited by our disobedience  
No divinely given task may be lightly regarded  
God would have us love all men  
The path of "self-will" is always downward  
The condemnation of exclusiveness  
It is easier to do God's bidding than to fight Him  
The transience and urgency of life  
God uses all incidents  
Opportunity comes when we least expect it



MICAH  
THE PROPHET OF THE PEOPLE

**MICAH:** "Who Is Like Jehovah?" "God's Man" - He had integrity, courage and truthfulness. He is described as fearless, merciless and severe. Micah was contemporary with Isaiah and Hosea, and probably knew Amos. In contrast to Isaiah, he was an "unsophisticated rustic." Mainly a prophet to Judah, but his message did involve Israel. He is the only prophet to direct his message to both kingdoms. (Van Dooren). Consider Micah 3:8.

**DATE:** 735 - 715 BC. During the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah.

**CONTENTS:** Arranged logically to carry forward its message. Judah and Israel are denounced because of their wickedness. The captivity is prophesied, and the remnant is promised. The Messianic pictures are beautiful. Micah is quoted three times in the Bible: Micah 3:12 in Jeremiah 26:18; Micah 5:2 in Matthew 2:5,6; Micah 7:6 in Matthew 10:35,36. There six prophecies found in the book:

Samaria, capital of Israel to fall (1:6,7)  
Jerusalem and the temple to be destroyed (3:12; 7:13)  
The Babylonian captivity (4:10)  
The return from captivity (4:1-8; 7:11,14-17)  
The Messiah to be born in Bethlehem (4:8; 5:2-4)  
Universal peace to come when men learn of Christ (4:1-5)

Micah specifically condemns these sins of the people:

Idolatry (1:7; 5:13)  
Evil plans and devices (2:1)  
Covetousness (2:2)  
Evil of princes, prophets and priests (3:2-11)  
Witchcraft (5:12)  
Dishonesty (6:10-12)  
Corruption (7:2-4)  
Treachery (7:5,6)

**CHARACTERISTICS:**

Vigorous, vivid, fresh, straight-forward, uses repetitions to enforce the message; uses long and complicated sentences; flashes of indignation; beautiful promises; historical references; good, terse, classic Hebrew; contains a timeless message; has a beautiful concept of God and right religion. He is the first of the prophets to threaten Jerusalem with destruction. His message is peculiarly to the cities. He uses figures, similes, and questions. The contrasts are prominent.

**OUTLINE:** Judgment (1-3); Comfort (4,5); Salvation (6,7)

MICAH  
THE PROPHET OF THE PEOPLE

- LESSONS: Religion and ethics are inseparable
- The folly of untrue and unworthy leaders
- The certainty of God's purpose and undertakings
- How different our lives would be if only God were the Center and Circumference of all things, as He was to Micah, to whom God was Everything
- The sin and emptiness of hypocrisy
- The reasonableness of God's basic requirements, and the unchangeableness of His demands

NAHUM  
THE PROPHET OF CONSOLATION

NAHUM: "Comfort" "Consolation" "Compassion"

OCCUPATION:

Not known

HOME: Elkosh. Four possible locations have been suggested - (1) Assyria, North of Nineveh; (2) Southwest of Jerusalem; (3) Somewhere in Galilee; (4) The site of Capernaum.

DATE: 663 - 610 BC. The date is indicated by 3:8-10. Thebes by Assurbanipal in 663 BC; Ninevah by Nabopolassar in 606 BC

MESSAGE: Divine vengeance and Divine mercy

THEME: The destruction and doom of Nineveh

CHARACTERISTICS:

Stately, orderly, impressive; poetic in form; unsurpassed for power of description; marked with clearness; vivid imagination; language is strong and brilliant; emotional and full of feeling; "The most vivid and passionate fragment of declamation in all literature." (Brice); fiery vigor, glowing color, dramatic impressiveness and picturesque phraseology.

OUTLINE: Doom Declared (1)  
Doom Described (2)  
Doom Deserved (3)

LESSONS: God will forgive sin repented of, but will not condone sin persisted in  
The goodness and the severity of God  
There is a limit to God's patience  
God's sovereignty  
The judgment of the Lord though long deferred is sure and final  
Consider Zechariah 4:6  
Might does not make right  
The person who deliberately rejects God, deliberately elects doom



## HABAKKUK THE PROPHET OF FAITH

**HABAKKUK** “Ardent Embrace” (embracer, wrestler, to cling) - a man of faith. Contemporary of Jeremiah. Has been called the “Freethinker among the Prophets,” and the “Father of Israel’s Religious doubt.”

**HOME:** Unknown, although generally assumed to have worked and lived in Jerusalem. One of the Levitical Choristers (3:19).

**DATE:** 612 - 605 BC. The historical background is found in 2 Kings 22:1-24:16; 2 Chronicles 34:1-36:10.

**THEME:** Punishment of Judah and Babylon. Tyranny, strife and lawlessness were prevalent in Judah.

**MESSAGE:** Habakkuk experienced a particular disturbing problem. He saw the prosperity of Babylon, and its great measure of sin. All around he saw injustice, oppression and suffering of all his own people at the hands of Babylon. He was perplexed in the “inactivity” of God in this respect. He posed questions to God. He received the following answer: “Though evil seems to prosper for a while, the righteous alone have permanent life.” Habakkuk differs from his predecessors in that the former prophets had addressed the people FOR God, but in this work, God is addressed ON THE PART of the people.

### **CHARACTERISTICS:**

Strongly lyrical character, pre-eminent for its literary beauty. The style is nearer the Psalms than any other prophetic writing. the book opens in gloom and closes in glory. It opens in mystery and questioning, and closes in certainty and affirmation. It is remarkable for its moral and spiritual insight.

### **VERSES TO MARK:**

1:2,4,13; 2:3,4,8,12,14,20

### **KEY WORDS:**

“Why” “Woe” “Wait”

**OUTLINE:** Sign of the Prophet (1:2)  
Silence of the Prophet (2:20)  
Song of the Prophet (3:18)

**LESSONS:** God can be trusted  
The “short” view is apt to be the false view  
We may see and understand God only when we rise above doubt  
We are to address our problems to God, and not against Him  
Evil is self-destructive

HABAKKUK  
THE PROPHET OF FAITH

A living faith determines conduct. Religion and ethics go hand in hand  
Sin leads to destruction  
Tyranny, strife and lawlessness were prevalent in Judah:

Strife and contention (1:3)  
Oppressed righteous (1:2,13)  
Lived in open sin (2:4,5,15,16)  
Worshiped idols (2:18,19)  
Oppressed the poor (1:4,14,15)

The five “woes” announced against Babylon:

For dishonesty (2:6)  
For covetousness (2:9)  
For bloody building enterprises (2:12)  
For debauchery (2:15)  
For idolatry (2:18-20)



ZEPHANIAH  
THE PROPHET OF PROMISE

ZEPHANIAH “Jehovah Hides” (“Has Hidden”). Three other men in the Bible carry the same name. Zephaniah is a descendant of Hezekiah. His prophecy falls between that of Micah and Nahum. He is a contemporary with Jeremiah. Often said to be the most “uncompromising of all the prophets.”

HOME: Probably Jerusalem

OCCUPATION:  
Unknown

DATE: 630 - 625 BC

BACKGROUND:  
2 Kings 22,23; 2 Chronicles 34-37

THEME: “The Coming of the Day of Jehovah”

KEY WORDS:  
Visitation; Restoration

CHARACTERISTICS:  
Hot, fiery, burning; Zephaniah is called the “Puritan.” The fieriest of the prophets; The Day of Jehovah is mentioned 14 times in the book. The book is simple and austere; somber in tone; filled with threatening and denunciations; one of the seldom studied books of the Old Testament. The closing section is described as the “Sweetest Love Song In The Old Testament.”

OUTLINE: Look Within (1:1-2:3) [Wrath Coming On Judah]  
Look Around (2:4-3:8) [Wrath On All Nations]  
Look Beyond (3:9-20) [After Wrath, Healing]

LESSONS: Man’s belief about God largely determines his conduct  
The wrath of God is a terrible thing when turned upon sin  
The necessity of warning people - Zephaniah 1:14-16  
God gives assurance that the humble ones will be safe in His presence  
God’s purpose is not to wreck vengeance, but to cleanse and refine  
The spiritual natures of God’s kingdom  
Lack of trust in God leads to one form or another of false worship  
Greater blessings mean greater responsibility  
Consider Psalm 17:8



## HAGGAI THE PROPHET OF CONSTRUCTION

**HAGGAI:** “Festive” “Festival” - Haggai was older than Zechariah his contemporary. Cf. Haggai 2:3; Zechariah 2:4). Haggai has been called the “minister of encouragement.”

**DATE:** 520 BC

**KEY WORD:** “Consider” “Consider your ways”

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**  
Ezra 1-6

**MESSAGE:** Everything must take second place to the work of the Lord.  
Self-advancement, self-interest, and self-security comes after seeking to do the will of the Lord, and not first.

**THEME:** Exhortation to rebuild the temple

**CHARACTERISTICS:**  
Haggai is the first of the “post-exilic” prophets. His writing is plain, simple and to the point. He lacks the “brilliance of imagination” like the other prophets. He considered the practical needs of the moment, so everything else was of a secondary importance. His writing is very business-like and frequently asks questions to enforce his message. His work is quoted in Hebrews 12:26,27 (from Haggai 2:6).

**OUTLINE:** 1st Message - A Call To Action (1:1-11)  
2nd Message - A Promise Of Presence (1:12-15)  
3rd Message - A Call To Courage (2:1-9)  
4th Message - A Call To Cleansing (2:10-19)  
5th Message - A Call To Hope (2:20-23)

**LESSONS:** If material considerations crowd out God, our wealth costs too much  
Full obedience to God is a necessary condition of approach to Him  
Discouragement is no reason to neglect God-given duties  
When a good work needs to be done, now is the time to do it  
A “thus saith the Lord” is the basis of all good preaching



ZECHARIAH  
THE PROPHET OF VISIONS

**ZECHARIAH** "He Whom Jehovah Remembers" - his name was a very common name.

About 30 different people have that name in the Old Testament. Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai (Ezra 5:1; 6:14), and was both prophet and priest. He came up to Jerusalem from Babylon under Zerubbabel (Nehemiah 12:4,16). He was a man of unusual vision.

**DATE:** 520 BC. (First 8 chapters from 520 - 516 BC. Chapters 9-14 have been great variations of date)

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

Ezra 1-6

**CHARACTERISTICS:**

Difficult of interpretation. The scope of vision and spiritual thoughts challenge the most intense reflection. The visions are mostly Messianic. The book contains more Messianic prophecies than any other Minor Prophet book. It is the longest, and the most obscure, of the Minor Prophets. the emphasis is to visions as divine communication. the book is of strong apocalyptic symbolism. It has been called the "Apocalypse of the Old Testament."

**MESSAGE:** The people from the exile had now become apathetic and needed encouragement to complete the temple. What Haggai has done, Zechariah carries further. Zechariah looks beyond the "immediate" to the coming Messiah.

**KEY WORDS:**

Lord of Hosts (52X); Restoration; glory

**PURPOSE:** To bring about spiritual revival; to inspire the people to complete building; to comfort and console the people of God; to register divine prophecies concerning the Messiah.

**CONTENTS:** The book is composed of two major parts. Part One is made up of chapters 1-8 with 3 distinct messages based on the strongest and most intense spiritual call to repentance as found in the Old Testament. This call is encouraged by a presentation of 8 visions. Part Two is made up of chapters 9-14. It consists of two "burdens" elaborating on that which was to be - of judgment and redemption.

**LESSONS:** The "former" prophets are appealed to as authentic (1:4; 7:12)  
True religion is to be worldwide  
Our battles are with Satan  
Consider Zechariah 4:6  
National greatness consists in the recognition of God



## MALACHI THE PROPHET OF CONCLUSION

MALACHI: "Messenger" There is virtually no biographical information available. He is not mentioned anywhere in the Old Testament, or New Testament. He is referred to as "The Unknown Prophet" and "The Preacher of Destiny." Malachi is a prophet of God (1:1). However, the meaning of the name has given rise to the supposition it is a "title" rather than a name.

DATE: Dates are varied. Anywhere from 455 to 400 BC. The temple has already been completed and sacrifices are being offered (Malachi 1:7-10; 3:1,8). There is a Persian Governor (1:8 - Pechah). The sins that Malachi denounces are the same as Nehemiah denounced.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:  
Nehemiah 8-13

MESSAGE: The book shows the love of God for a backslidden people. It depicts the judgment of sin; blessing for righteousness. Malachi was sent to denounce the practices which were dishonoring God and His worship.

THEME: Encouragement given for a disheartened people. Idolatry had vanished, but the people were hypercritical and guilty of hollow formalism and complaining skepticism.

CHARACTERISTICS:  
Written as of the Scribes. A book of describing, revealing, calling, answering, challenging and promises. It is in the form of "didactic-dialectic." It may be classed as the most "argumentative of all Old Testament prophecies." It has a repeated pattern of discourse. "You Say" appears eight times. Contains a strong emphasis on the Law of God. 47 out of 55 verses are verses spoken by the Lord which surpasses all other prophetic books in proportion. He is the last prophetic voice of the Old Testament. The book is strong, vigorous, clear-cut, and spiritual zeal is attained.

OUTLINE: Love Of God *Stated* (1:1-5)  
Love Of God *Scorned* (1:6; 2:17; 3:7-15)  
Love of God *Shown* (3:1-6; 3:16-4:6)

SEVEN QUESTIONS OF THE BOOK:  
Wherein hast thou loved us? (1:2)  
Wherein have we despised thy name? (1:6)  
Wherein have we polluted thee? (1:7)  
Wherein have we wearied thee? (2:17)  
Wherein shall we return? (3:7)  
Wherein have we robbed thee? (3:8)  
Wherein have we spoken against thee? (3:13)

MALACHI  
THE PROPHET OF CONCLUSION

**LESSONS:** Divorce is an abomination in God's eyes  
Insincerity in worship is an abomination to God  
One who lives in willful sin cannot hope to please God by cheap sacrifices  
"Cheap" religion avails nothing  
The Old Testament leaves us with the promise of Christ  
The besetting sin of formalism and skepticism  
Sins then are the same as today  
Consider Malachi 1:5 with 2 Thessalonians 1:10

Winn  
Brockman (93)  
Hunt Aunt  
4/24/07  
Liberty