

Minor Prophets

Why Study the Minor Prophets?

1 Timothy 3:16

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God^[a] may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

Jesus quotes or references the prophets frequently.

Luke 24:27 “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Luke 24:44 “Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

Paul seems to think the gospel is laid out in the prophets

Romans 1:1-2 “Paul, a servant^[a] of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures...”

Background

The Hebrew Bible is traditionally divided into three sections. This is the Bible Jesus would have read:

- תורה/ Torah (Teaching) are the first five books
- נביאים / Nevi'im (Prophets):
 - former prophets (Joshua through Kings) Theological History
 - Latter prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and **the Book of the 12**
- כתובים/ Ketuvim (Writings): Psalms and Lamentations, Proverbs, Song, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Ruth, Job, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles)
- from which is derived the name **Tanakh**.

Historical Context

While studying the prophets it is a good practice to have few other bookmarks in your Bible. You may want one in Chronicles and one in Kings.

Chronicles and Kings overlap with the Prophets and cover the same time period but reflect different perspectives.

Kings traces the history from the prophetic viewpoint, passing judgment on kings as either good or bad. Chronicles is from the priestly standpoint, with an emphasis on temple ritual. Because Israel is apostate, Chronicles, being priestly, deals mostly with Judah. Throughout all of it God is still their righteous,

perfect King whom they rejected, beginning with requesting Saul. Each King falls short, but there is a hope for a future perfect king that God will send.

The Prophets:

- A prophet was a spokesman, or a mouthpiece for God. He had a message and acted as God’s own mouth speaking to the people.
- Their words were authoritative
- They were “forth-tellers” more than “foretellers”. Primarily they revealed God’s plans and will to His people.
- They often had different individual roles/functions: counselors to the king, record keepers, etc.
- Reminded of the past, called them back to God in the present, and gave promises and warnings concerning the future

Major Theme:

Each book deals with a specific topic that sets it apart, but the unifying theme is “Covenant Faithfulness”.

Biblical				Order		
Notes	Book	Focus	Structure	Date B.C.	Book	Kings
Metaphor of unfaithfulness carries throughout the rest of the 12 books	Hosea	Israel	Introduction	845-750	Obadiah	Jehoram (Ju) Joram (Is)
“Yom” Hebrew for “day” appears 170 times. 135 are in the phrase “The day of the Lord”	Joel	Judah		835-796	Joel	Joash (Ju) Jehu/Jehoahaz (Is)
	Amos	Israel	Complication	793-753	Jonah	Jereboam II (Is) Amaziah (Ju)
God the has right to judge and pardon all nations	Obadiah	Judah & Edom		753-715	Hosea	Jotham/Ahaz (Ju) Jeroboam/Pekah/Hoshea (Is)
	Jonah	Israel & Assyria		760-755	Amos	Jotham/Uzziah (Ju) Jereboam/Pekah (Is)
	Micah	Judah		770-710	Micah	Jotham/Ahaz/Hezekiah (Ju) Zechariah-Hoshea (Is)

	Nahum	Judah & Assyria	Crisis	655	Nahum	Manasseh (Ju)
	Habakkuk	Judah & Babylon		625	Zephaniah	Josiah (Ju)
The Day of the Lord is described as "re-creation".	Zephaniah	Judah	Falling Action	610	Habakkuk	Josiah/Jehoahaz/Jehoiakim (Ju)
Post Exile: Reminder of a Restoration to come	Haggai	Judah	Resolution	520	Haggai	No King
	Zechariah	Judah		520	Zechariah	No King
	Malachi	Judah		460-420	Malachi	No King

The gospel in the Old Testament was seen clearly that God is both grace and truth, love and justice

Exodus 34:6-7 "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God **merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,** ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands,^[a] forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, **BUT who will by no means clear the guilty,** visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

We see these played out constantly in the minor prophets to point in hope to the coming of the true King who will reign on David's throne, bringing in the Kingdom of God and the Day of the Lord to His Covenant people.

Themes of Each Book

Hosea God Loves Israel. Hosea 2:8, 0:10 and 11:8-9

Joel The Day of the Lord. Joel 2:1, 10

Amos The Righteousness of God. Amos 2:6-12

Obadiah Doom Upon Edom. Obadiah vs.1

Jonah God Loves All Nations. Jonah 4:2

Micah God is Judge and Warrior. Micah 1:2, 4:2

To be the center of God's presence His people must be righteous.

Nahum Judgment on Assyria. Nahum 1:1-2

Habakkuk God Judges Evil. Habakkuk 1:5

Zephaniah The Day of the Lord. Zephaniah 1:2

Haggai Rebuild the Temple. Haggai 1:5

Zechariah Israel's Future Glory. Zechariah 1:14

Malachi Faithfulness Covenant. Malachi 3:1-2a

Large-scale Themes

1. God's Amazing Love and Covenant Commitment to Israel
2. Need for God's People to Reflect His Character
3. Israel's Persistent Sin, Unfaithfulness, Judgment, and Salvation/Restoration
 - a. The Day of the Lord
4. The Coming of the New David (Amos 9:11-15)

Ultimately, through God's faithful covenant with His people, via His Son Jesus, He will extend His glory to the ends of the earth. The Minor Prophets won't let God's people forget it.

We shouldn't take our salvation lightly. The prophets yearned to see Jesus day. We get to live what they longed to see, and hoped for in faith. Let us live in faith for the glory of our Covenant