

# Themes of the Minor Prophets

December 2012

Book	Time	Theme	Keys	Contemporary	
Obadiah	848 BC to 841 BC?	Condemns the nation of Edom (Descended from Esau) for refusing to act as a brother toward Judah (Descended from Jacob)	Judgment of Edom	Elisha?	Assyrian Empire 1000 to 625 BC
Joel	835 BC?	A recent locust plague illustrates the far more terrifying day of the Lord. God appeals to the people to repent in order to avert the coming disaster.	Day of the Lord	Elisha? Joash?	
Jonah	782 BC to 753 BC	The repentant response of the people of Nineveh to Jonah's one-line prophetic message caused the God mercy to spare the city.	Revival of Nineveh	Jeroboam II	
Hosea	755 BC to 710 BC	The story of Hosea and his faithless wife illustrates the loyal love of God and the spiritual adultery of Israel.	God's Love for Israel	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz & Hezekiah	
Amos	755 BC	In eight pronouncements of judgment, Amos spirals around the surrounding countries before landing on Israel. He lists the sins of Israel and calls for repentance.	Judgment of Israel	Uzziah Jeroboam	
Micah (Dispersal of Israel 721)	735 BC to 710 BC	In spite of divine retribution against the corruption of Israel and Judah, God's covenant with them will be fulfilled in Messiah's future kingdom.	Judgment & Restoration of Judah	Jotham, Ahaz, & Hezekiah	
Nahum	663 BC to 612 BC	About 125 years after Nineveh repented under the preaching of Jonah, Nahum predicted the destruction of the city because of idolatry brutality.	Judgment of Nineveh	Manasseh	Babylonian Empire 625 to 539 BC
Zephaniah	640 BC to 612 BC	The coming day of the Lord is a time of awesome judgment followed by great blessing. Judah stands condemned, but God will restore the fortunes of the remnant.	Day of the Lord	Josiah	
Habakkuk (Fall of Jerusalem) 586	609 BC to 597 BC	Troubled with God's plan to use the Babylonians as His rod of judgment of Judah, Habakkuk praises the Lord after gaining a better perspective on His power and purposes.	Live by Faith	Jehoiakim?	
Haggai	520 BC	After the Babylonian exile, Haggai urges the Jews to put God first and finish the Temple so that they can enjoy God's blessing,	Reconstruction of the Temple	Zerubbabel Ezra	Persian Empire 539 – 330 BC
Zechariah	520 BC	Like Haggai, Zechariah exhorts the Jews to complete the construction of the Temple. He relates it to the coming of Messiah in a series of visions and messianic prophecies.	Prepare for the Messiah	Zerubbabel Haggai	
Malachi	432 BC to 425 BC?	The spiritual climate of the people had grown cold and Malachi rebukes them for their religious and social compromise. If they return to God with sincere hearts, they will be blessed.	Appeal to Backsliders	Nehemiah	

# Notes on Minor Prophets

December 2012

## **Obadiah** – “*Servant or Worshiper of Yahweh*”

- 848 to 841 BC
- Contemporary of Elisha
- Edom (Red) Esau's Stew – Traded for Birthright –
  - Edom refused Israel's Passage to Canaan
  - Edom opposed Saul and was subdued by David and Solomon
  - Forced by the Nabateans to Idumaea
  - Herod was a Idumaeon
- 1-18 Judgment certain for Edom - (Total Destruction) Edom was never heard from again after the destruction of Jerusalem 70 AD
- 19-21 Restoration of Israel
- Christ of Obadiah
  - 15-16 Judge of Nations
  - 17-20 Savior of Israel
  - 21 Possession of the Kingdom

## **Joel** – “*Yahweh is God*”

- 835 BC
- During Reign of King Joash - II Kings 11-12
- Plague of Locust picture of future Judgment
  - Pictures the coming Terrible Judgment and Great Blessing of Judah
  - Blessing 2:28-32
- Judgment of the Gentiles Chapter 3 1-15
- Restoration of Judah
- Christ as Judge - Joel 2:28-32 & 3:2-12 and Acts 2:16-21
- The great and terrible day of the Lord 2:1-11
- Salvation 2:32

## **Jonah** – “*Dove*”

- 760 BC
- Contemporary of Jeroboam II of Israel
- Times were good as the economy improved and the Assyrians was in a mild decline
- Assyrian cruelty was legendary
- Nineveh was a major city in Assyria
- “I won't go.” – “I will go” – “I'm here.” – “I shouldn't have come”
- Jesus likened himself to Jonah

### Hosea – “*Salvation*”

- 755-710 BC
- Reigns of – Uzziah (767-739BC) - Jotham (739-731 BC) - Ahaz (731-715BC) and Hezekiah (715-686BC) of Judah and Jeroboam II
- Hosea and Amos share the same time period.
- Hosea addressed the Northern Kingdom often called Ephraim being the largest tribe.
- His own relationship with his adulterous wife Gomer is compared to relationship of adulterous Israel and God
- The calf was the immediate object of the idolatrous worship. They sacrificed to the calf (1 Kings 12:32); they kissed the calf (Hosea 13:2) and swore by these idol-calves (Amos 8:14). “Calf worship paved the way for coarser and cruder worship of nature, under the names of Baal and Ashtaroah, with their abominations of consecrated child sacrifices, and horrible sensuality.” It led to the most awful sins and degradation.
- The disobedience led to the dispersion of Israel by the Assyrians in 721 BC
- Hosea's prophecy is the last chance for Israel

### Amos - “*Burden or Burden-Bearer*”

- 760 – 753 BC
- Reigns of Uzziah king of Judah and Jeroboam II king of Israel
- A sheep herder from Tekoa (12 miles south of Jerusalem). “I was an herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit” 7:14
- The basic theme of Amos is the coming judgment of Israel because of the holiness of Yahweh and the sinfulness of His covenant people
- Amos predicts the coming doom to the Northern Kingdom but they think his message is preposterous.
- God sends Amos to warn the people of Israel but they reject his plea and the course of judgment cannot be altered.
- “Under the reign of Jeroboam II the northern kingdom of Israel flourished as never before or after. There was a great external prosperity. Therefore, we find that the prophet mentions the rich, their wealth and luxury, their arrogant pride and self-security and the oppression of the poor. Underneath it all was an awful moral corruption, the fruit of false worship. In this state of prosperity, immorality and false worship they did not dream of any coming calamity whatever. Such were the days in which the herdsman of Tekoa appeared upon the scene to give an inspired testimony against the nation.”

## Notes on Minor Prophets

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### **Micah** - "*Who is like Yahweh?*"

- 735 – 710 BC
- During reigns – Jotham 739-731 BC – Ahaz (731-715BC) and Hezekiah (715-686 BC) of Judah
- Contemporary of Hosce in the northern kingdom and Isaiah in the court of Jerusalem
- Christ of Micah
  - 5:2 “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose going forth have been from of old, from ever lasting.”
- Judgment and restoration of Judah
  - 1/3 of the book indicts Israel and Judah for specific sins
  - 1/3 of the book predicts the judgment coming as a result of sins
  - 1/3 message of hope and consolation

### **Nahum** - "*Comfort of Yahweh*" (Shortened form of Nehemiah)

- 663-612 BC
- The Destruction of Nineveh in Nahum's prophecy
  - Decreed
  - Described
  - Deserved
- A moat 150ft wide and 60ft deep, walls 100ft high and wide enough for 3 chariots to ride side by side, and towers 100ft above the walls, the city was apparently impregnable, making Nahum's prophecy seem unlikely.
- The city of Nineveh destroyed in 612 BC lay hidden until it was discovered in 1842 AD. Nahum prophesied that it would “be hid” 3:11
- The people in Judah who trust in the Lord will be happy to hear of God's judgment upon the proud and brutal Assyrians

### **Zephaniah** – “*Yahweh has Hidden*”

- 640-612 BC
- With Habakkuk and Jeremiah, Zephaniah is among the last prophecies before the exile to Babylon
- Contemporary of Nahum
- Josiah is King of Judah as Judah's last righteous king
- Zephaniah traces his genealogy 4 generations to the Godly King Hezekiah
- As the only prophet of royal descent he may have been granted access to Josiah
- Josiah's first reform took place in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of his reign — 628 BC
  - Tore down the altars of Baal
  - Destroyed foreign incense altars
  - Burned the bones of the false prophets on their own altars
  - Broke the Asherim images
- Josiah's second reform in 622 BC was carried out when the Book of the Law was found in the temple by Hilkiah the priest
- The Day of the Lord
  - Judgment of Judah
  - Judgment of the Nations
- God wants to spare his people
- In the end God restores Israel and they inherit the blessings

### **Habakkuk**- “*One who Embraces*”

- 607 BC
- Early part of Jehoiakim's reign (609-597 BC)
- Jehoiakim a godless king who led the nation down a path of destruction
- Divisions of Habakkuk
  - The first dialogue with God Habakkuk 1:1-11
    - Why does God allow the wickedness of Judah to go unpunished
    - God answers that he is raising up the Babylonians as His rod of judgment
  - The second dialogue with God Habakkuk 1:12-2:20
    - How can God punish Judah with a nation more wicked
    - Judah is guilty of the same offenses and God is sovereign (2:20 “but the Lord is in his temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him”)
  - The praise of God
    - His person 3:1-3
    - His power 3:4-12
    - His plan 3:13-19
    - “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation” 3:18

## Notes on Minor Prophets

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### **Haggai** – “*Festive*”

- Haggai is dated precisely to 520 BC
- Haggai 1:1- September 1, 520 BC & Haggai 2:10 December 24, 520 BC
- 16 years after Zerubbabel started to rebuild the temple, Haggai and Zechariah began to urge the people to complete the unfinished temple.
- Darius I was ruler of Persia
- Completion of the Temple:
  - The people turned from work on the temple to build their own homes
  - Work stops on the temple
  - God removes his blessing and their economy began to sink
  - Indifference to God
  - The people respond to Haggai's message and work begins again on the temple
- The new temple does not measure up to the original temple so Haggai describes the future temple.

### **Zechariah** - “*Yahweh Remembers*”

- Zechariah is dated precisely to 520 - 518 BC
- Zechariah 1:1 -November, 520 BC & Zechariah 7:1 December 4, 518 BC
- Prepare for the Messiah 9-14
- “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” 9:9
- Eight Visions – 1 to 5 are for comfort and 6-8 are judgment
  - *Horsemen in the myrtle trees* – God will rebuild Zion and His people
  - *Four horns and craftsmen* – Israel's oppressors will be judged
  - *Man with the measuring line* – God will protect and glorify Jerusalem
  - *The cleansing of Joshua the high priest* – Israel will be cleansed and restored by the coming Branch
  - *The golden lamp stand* - God's spirit is empowering Zerubbabel and Joshua
  - *The flying scroll* - individual sin will be judged
  - *The woman in the ephah* — National sin will be removed
  - *The four chariots* - God's judgment will descend on the nations
  - *The crowning of Joshua* - the coming of the Branch who will be King and Priest.
- Four messages Chapters 7&8
  - A rebuke of empty ritualism
  - A reminder of past disobedience
  - The restoration and consolation of Israel
  - The recovery of joy in the kingdom
- Two burdens Chapter 9 to 14
  - Concerns the First Advent and rejection of Israel's coming King (9-11)
  - Concerns the Second Advent of Christ and the acceptance of the King (12 -14)

## Notes on Minor Prophets

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### **Malachi** – “*Messenger of Yahweh*”

- 432 - 425 C
- Focus:
  - Privilege of the Nation
  - Pollution of the Nation
  - Promise of the Nation
- Prophesied approximately 100 years after Haggai and Zechariah
- Prophet in the days of Nehemiah
- Message to a people plagued with:
  - corrupt priest
  - wicked practices
  - false sense of security in their privileged relationship with God
- Malachi probes:
  - hypocrisy
  - infidelity
  - mixed marriages
  - divorce
  - false worship
  - arrogance
- Predicts the next great prophet John the Baptist 400 year later – 3:1 (Isaiah 40:3)
- 3:2 - 5 predicts the second coming
- God questions their hearts:
  - God: “*I have loved you*” – People: “*How have you loved us?*”
  - God: “*O priest that despise my name*” – Priest: “*How have we despised God's name?*”
  - God: “*You have not kept my covenant*” – People: “*How have we profaned the covenant?*”
  - God: “*You have wearied the Lord*” – People: “*Where have we worried him?*”
- They have said in effect, “*Oh come on now: It's not that bad*”