

12 Minor Prophets

Hosea – 14 chapters

Hosea was called upon by God to do something very difficult. To put the relationship between God and Israel on vivid display, God instructed Hosea to go and take a city prostitute to be his wife. This relationship became a running commentary of God's devotion, pictured by faithful Hosea, to an adulterous people, pictured by the deviant Gomer. Time and again in his book, Hosea has to pursue his bride back to the city streets and bring her home. His devotion is obvious, as is God's pursuits of those whom He loves. On the other hand, Gomer continued to forsake Hosea's love and ran to the arms of those with nothing substantial to offer, just like the nation Israel who left Yahweh for the emptiness of idolatry. Ultimately, Hosea warns Israel of God's coming judgment. He would not tolerate her unfaithfulness.

Joel – 3 chapters

Joel wrote to a very disobedient Judah. His prophecy of coming judgment has eschatological interpretation in view. Some have surmised that Joel may be referencing the invasion of Assyria's Sennacherib, but the description seems to clearly point to the tribulation period's hardships and difficulties. Joel begins by describing a locust plague coming on the land that would be symbolic of God's destruction. This was to bring about repentance and confession. Following this would be the invasion of a mighty army (this is referencing the end times). In conclusion, Joel foretells the restoration of Israel, the judgement of the gentile nations, the destruction of the great army of men, and the ensuing Millennium.

Amos – 9 chapters

Amos was a cattle rancher that God called into the prophetic ministry. His writing opens with a pronouncement of judgment that would befall the nations of the region. In chapter one he describes a general judgment upon six nations neighboring Judah and Israel, and then chapter two discusses the impending judgment of those two nations. He spends much time discussing the sin of Israel and how God would bring judgment upon her. Amos used five visions to communicate this judgment: 1) The plagues of locust, 2) unrestrained fire, 3) the plumbline, 4) the basket of summer fruit, 5) the destruction of the temple. Amos concludes with reassurance however, promising that Christ would bring blessing again.

Obadiah – 1 chapter

Obadiah served the Lord during a very sinful time in the history of Judah. King Jehoram has turned away from serving Yahweh and has embraced the idolatry of his wife (Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel). This brought the downfall of the nation at the hands of Edom to the southeast. Unlike most prophets who warned their homeland and fellow countrymen of impending judgment, Obadiah prophecies against Edom because of their overthrow of Jerusalem and consequently Judah. God would retaliate, and judgment was coming to Edom for their treachery.

Jonah – 4 chapters

Of all of the minor prophets, Jonah is likely the best known because of his miraculous survival for three days within the stomach of the whale. He has become the iconic object lesson for consequences that follow disobedience, for he was called by God to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh, but in rebellion Jonah fled to Tarsus. God did not kill Jonah, but made life miserable as he had a great fish swallow Jonah to teach him the necessary lesson. Ultimately Jonah did go and preach to the people of Nineveh with tremendous success. In bitterness Jonah cried out in disappointment over the sure mercy of God. The book closes with Jonah morning the kindness of God to those wicked who repent.

Micah – 7 chapters

Micah, like several other minor prophets, and Isaiah, prophecies the coming judgment of Israel and Judah because of their persistence in sin. (At this point, I get frustrated. How dumb were the Jews to have so many of God's men preaching against their sin through the years, and yet they continued to go back to it.) Micah's message comes in triplet with each section beginning with the cry, "Hear!" His first section is a significant passage foretelling the coming judgment of God on Israel and Judah because of their sin. The second section highlights the coming Messianic Kingdom when the wicked rulers of earth will be overthrown and Christ will rule as the wondrous King over a wondrous kingdom. The third section deals with the punishment of God's people and the fact that they will someday receive His final mercy.

Nahum – 3 chapters

Nahum wrote against Israel's enemy to the north, Nineveh. About 100 years after Jonah's ministry, the people of Nineveh were back to their wicked ways. Chapters two and three bear record of a detailed prophecy of Nineveh's fall by a flood undermining the city walls and thereby granting access to invasion (which actually happened in 612 B.C.), and why God would bring such action against the city. Perhaps most notable about Nahum's book is the fact that he spends the first third of it praising God through song.

Habakkuk – 3 chapters

In his book Habakkuk first approaches God in prayer imploring him as to why He isn't addressing the rampant sin of Israel. God answers and informs Habakkuk that Babylon is on its way. It would be through Babylon that God would judge His people. At this news Habakkuk is confused. How can you judge a wicked people with an even worse pagan nation? Ultimately God reassures Habakkuk that Babylon will also receive her judgment for God is in control. The last chapter of Habakkuk then praying in trust of God who is wise, just, and perfect in His sovereignty.

Zephaniah – 3 chapters

God uses Zephaniah to forewarn Judah of Babylon's coming as judgment. This leads into a prophecy against the neighboring nations who also have been rebellious. Jerusalem would finally

see God's judgment as the capital of the nation who left God for wickedness. These prophecies can not only be applied to the Babylonian captivity, but also to the eschatological Tribulation period. The final section of the book then assures rest in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ himself.

Haggai – 2 chapters

Though Haggai is very short, it contains four basic messages: 1) Because the people neglected to rebuild the temple, God was withholding blessing through provision in the land, so get to work, 2) The leadership needed to come back to realize the importance of leading in the rebuilding of the temple, 3) Obedience from the heart is more important to God than simply reconstructing the temple with their hands, and 4) One day the Messiah would establish His kingdom on earth.

Zechariah – 14 chapters

This is one of my favorite minor prophets. Zechariah also preaches hard to encourage the rebuilding of the temple, but he does it in very odd ways. In the course of Zechariah's duty on the night watch he saw eight night visions, each of which had a point to encourage the speedy reconstruction of the temple. The second half of his book deals with the coming kingdom of the Messiah. It outlines a very remarkable world where Christ rules supremely, and where Israel rules all other nations, a first for world history.

Malachi – 4 chapters

Malachi can be separated into four basic parts: 1) God expresses His great love for Israel, 2) The priests are admonished because they have neglected their responsibilities within the temple, 3) The people are also admonished because they have married foreign pagans, withhold their tithes, and refuse to sacrifice like they were supposed to, and 4) An admonition to keep the law as they waited on the coming of Christ.