

# MINOR PROPHETS

By Cliff Foster

EMPIRES	MAJOR PROPHETS	MINOR PROPHETS	
		House of Israel	House of Judah
ISRAEL NATION	ELIJAH	1. HOSEA 3. AMOS	2. JOEL 4. OBADIAH
ASSYRIAN EMPIRE	ISAIAH	5. JONAH 7. NAHUM	6. MICAH
BABYLONIAN EMPIRE	JEREMIAH		8. HABAKKUK 9. ZEPHANIAH
EXILE	DANIEL EZEKIEL		
MEDES/PERSIANS	NEHEMIAH EZRA		10. HAGGAI 11. ZECHARIAH 12. MALACHI

## THE STORY OF JUDAH'S PROPHETS:

As Israel Nation climb to their zenith, they became distracted by the inhabitants of the land. They turned from God and some turned to other deities. God punished the nation of Israel and they would return to the Lord, on such cycle was by insects that completely devastated the country side. They ate all the crops and utterly destroyed the economy. **Joel** records these destructions and gives the message to Judah to repent unto God. Trust in God to provide and take care of his people. Judah continued to struggle with their faithfulness to God. Baal worship had become significant within the land. As the Jew's disobedience continued the punishment escalated. This time God used a neighboring nation to punish Israel, Syria. Israel kin, Edom, took great pleasure in watching Judah get punished. **Obadiah** declares that Edom will be wiped out for their enjoyment of Judah's punishment. Obadiah accuses them of enjoying it so much that they participated in it.

Judah continued this cyclic behavior for centuries. Their disobedience and unfaithfulness grew till the time of Isaiah. **Isaiah** declared all the Heavens and Earth to bear witness that Judah was a wicked and perverse nation. Isaiah brought a message of repentance. The House of Israel refused to repent and they were destroyed by the Assyrians. The House of Judah repented and they were spared extinction. **Micah's** message was given at this same time. His message was directed to the rulers and priests, they had led the people astray and they were at fault.

Although, Judah repented and turned back to God, this lasted for only a short period of time. The wickedness ran too deep within the children of Israel. Between the Assyrians and Babylonians ushered in Israel's darkest time period in their history. King Manasseh and King Amon incorporated all the deities of the day Israel's worship. **Habakkuk** witnessed this time and writes unto God why does the wicked continue to prosper. God responds that he was raising the Chaldeans (also known as the Babylonians) to punish the ungodly. Habakkuk could not understand why God would choose such a wicked nation as them to punish his own people. God simply told him that the just shall live by faith. **Zephaniah** was the forerunner to Jeremiah. He preached that all those who continued in idolatry would be destroyed. **Jeremiah** is referred to as the weeping prophet. God had called him to declare the punishment of Israel and that God would spare them if they would repent. Unfortunately, God also told him that they would not listen and God would destroy all of Israel.

As God had foretold, Judah refused to repent of its evil ways. The Babylonians came and destroyed Jerusalem, the temple and exiled all of Judah. They were transplanted into the country of the Chaldeans. **Daniel** was one of the royal houses that served the Babylonian king. Through his servitude ministered to the remnant of Israel, much as Joseph did for Israel. He declared in his prayer that Israel had done wickedness and he understood the term of 70 years. He petitioned to God to have mercy on Judah. **Ezekiel** overlapped both Daniel and Jeremiah, but he ministered to the Jews in Babylon. He was called to the ministry there and he gave hope to the people that God would restore them if they would be obedient to Him.

As God had foretold that at the conclusion of 70 years in exile, God would allow the Jewish nation to return. Under the Persian king Cyrus, the House of Judah was allowed to return to the promise land. They rebuilt the city and began to rebuild the temple. The Samaritans prevented Israel from finishing the temple. It sat unfinished for 15 years, till **Haggai** brought a sermon declaring that they have homes yet the Lord's house remains unfinished. **Zechariah** continues this ministry. He declares that Jerusalem would be restored, the temple would be restored, the high priest would be restored and some day the nation of Israel would be restored. **Nehemiah** came and restored the city of Jerusalem, the wall and brought economic reform. **Ezra** came and restored the law, and for this is known as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Moses, and brought a spiritual reform to the House of Judah.

To no surprise, the spiritual reform did not last. **Malachi**, which is a title to say messenger, accuses Israel of having a form of worship but their heart was not in it. He accuses them of bringing the sick and the lame sacrifices. He rightly declares that they would not provide them for a dignitary but they think it is okay to provide to God. Malachi concludes the Old Testament with the declaration that the fore runner to the Messiah would come in the power of **Elijah**.

#### **THE STORY OF ISRAEL PROPHETS:**

These Minor Prophets were from the Northern tribes of Israel. The primary idolatry that the House of Israel struggled with was calf worship. When Jeroboam led the revolt from the King of Judah, Rehoboam, he built his own worship center in Bethel. He built two calves and declared to the House of Israel, "Here are your gods who have delivered you from Egypt." This is the same declaration that Aaron made at Mount Sinai.

About midway through the history of the House of Israel, King Ahab, marries a Phoenician woman. He allowed her to establish Baal worship and many of the Israelites began to fall into it. **Elijah** challenged these 450 prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel. Elijah won this contest proving that God exists and that he was the supreme god. The Israelites slaughtered the 450 prophets. Shortly, after these events the house of Jehu rose up against the house of Ahab. Jehu slaughtered the entire house of Ahab in Jezreel and removed all of Baal worship from Israel. God was pleased with Jehu's actions to remove all of Baal worship, and offered the house of Jehu security past the 4<sup>th</sup> generation if they would be faithful to the Lord.

Jehu did not accept this offer and continued with Baal worship. In the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of the house of Jehu, **Hosea** was called to declare the message of God. Hosea was instructed to marry a prostitute. On the birth of his son, he was instructed to call him Jezreel. This was a prophetic symbol that God would avenge the blood split in Jezreel and God would cause the house of Jehu to cease. Hosea's wife bears two more children and then leaves him. Hosea is then instructed to find her and buy her back. The rest of Hosea's writing declares how the House of Israel is the prostitute by their idolatry. They have left the Lord and he was calling them back.

Israel does not repent from their idolatry. **Amos** is called to the ministry about the same time as Hosea. He declares the message that Israel will be destroyed for their idolatry. Amos visits the king's temple in Bethel. The high priest tells him if he wants to prophesy he can go to Judah. Israel had no desire to repent and seek the Lord and God fulfilled his promise. In 722 BC, the House of Israel was carried into captivity and lost to history.

**Jonah** was called to service from the Northern tribes of Israel, to go and speak to Nineveh the capital city of Assyria. Of course Jonah refuses, and dies in the belly of the whale. He is resurrected and goes to Nineveh to speak. They listen to Jonah and they do repent, but the repentance is only for a time. Jonah is disappointed for he had desired to see God destroy them. Although this visit of Jonah occurs before Hosea, God tells him the destruction is coming. That destruction was foretold by Nahum. **Nahum** was from the Northern tribes of Israel and was the prophet to foretell how the destruction of Nineveh occurs during the fall of Assyria. He is unique in that his prophecy is in the form of a poem.

### I. HOSEA:

1. Overview: Hosea began his prophesy 40 years before Israel was lost to the Assyrians. God instructs him to take an unfaithful wife. She bears him a son and a daughter. Hoses is instructed to name the children names that are prophetic messages to Israel. His wife leaves him to go after her lovers, and later desires to returns. In chapter 3, Hosea finds her and buys her back. The rest of the book is expounding upon these events related to Israel's unfaithfulness, judgment and God desire to love them.  
**Hosea 1:1-2:13** "go take a wife of whoredom and children of whoredoms: ..."  
**Hosea 3:1-5** "so I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver..."
2. Significance: Hosea prophesied the destruction of the Israel was the fulfillment of cutting off the House of Jehu for its slaughter of the House of Ahab and their unfaithfulness to God.  
**1 Kings 12:28** "and made two calves of god ...behold they gods ... which brought you out of Egypt."  
**2 Kings 10:28-31** "Jehu departed not from after them...the golden calves that were in Bethel..."

### II. JOEL:

1. Overview: Joel prophesies that the locust of destruction was punishment for their disobedience to God. God promises restoration and the book ends with the future restoration for Judah.  
**Joel 2:12-32** "Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning..."
2. Significance: Joel speaks of the life in the age to come. Peter speaks of Joel when the church is empowered with the Ghost. A taste of the age to come.  
**Joel 2:28-32** "I will pour out my spirit..."  
**Acts 2:14-21** "But this is that which was Spokane by the prophet Joel..."

### III. AMOS:

1. Overview: Amos' ministry was contemporary to Hosea, about 40 years before Israel was lost to the Assyrians. His message was directed to the House of Israel. Because Israel's continued idolatry, they would be carried away as captives by Assyria. Amos to the worship center in Bethel to deliver this message and the high priest told him if he wanted to prophesy to go to Judah.  
**Amos 7:10-17** "...and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land..."  
**2 Kings 10:28-31** "Jehu departed not from after them...the golden calves that were in Bethel..."
2. Significance: As the gospel message continue to spread, Gentiles began to receive the Spirit. God appointed Peter to be the witness for these Gentiles. When Peter returned to Jerusalem to report what he saw, the apostles had to decide what to do. James quotes Amos to the acceptance of these Gentiles.  
**Acts 15:13-21** "...that the remnant of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles...."

### IV. OBADIAH

1. Overview: Obadiah is the prophecy of the destruction of Edom for the Joy in the punishment of Jacob.  
**Obadiah 1:10-14** "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob... even thou wast as one of them..."
2. Significance: Edom will be destroyed. The last remnant of Edom was destroyed in 70 AD with the destruction of temple.  
**Obadiah 1:10** "thou shalt be cut off forever..."

### V. JONAH:

1. Overview: The book of Jonah describes a prophet by the name of Jonah. God calls him to service. He is to preach to the Ninevites. Jonah was too afraid of the people and believed they were undeserving that he went the other way. Jonah was cast into the sea and eaten by a large animal. From the grave he was revived and preached to Nineveh. Jonah is devastated that the repented and God spared them.
2. Significance:
  - a. Jesus compares his death to Jonah  
**Jonah 1:17** "Now the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."  
**Matthew 12:40** "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."
  - b. Power of Prayer  
**Jonah 3:9-10** "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger..."  
**2 Samuel 12:15-23 (22)** "...Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?"

## VI. MICAH

1. **Overview:** This was written at the time of Isaiah and the Assyrian threat. Micah was the forerunner to Isaiah's message declaring the destruction that God would bring upon them for their disobedience.  
**Micah 1:1-9** *"What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what are high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem?"*  
**Micah 3:1-7** *"Is it not for you to know judgment?"*
2. **Significance:** Micah prophesies of the Messiah to come.  
**Micah 5:1-9** *"But thou, Bethlehem ... yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me"*  
**Matthew 2:1-6** *"...it is written by the prophet, and thou Bethlehem..."*  
**John 7:41-42** *"...and hath not the scriptures said....and out of the town of Bethlehem..."*

## VII. NAHUM:

1. **Overview:** The entire book as a prophecy of the destruction of Nineveh. It is complete written in poetry and so most of the wording is pictures of what would be seen.
2. **Significance:** Destruction of Nineveh  
**Nahum 3: 5-7** *"Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts and I will discover thy skirt upon thy face, and I will show the nations thy nakedness and the kingdoms thy shame."*

## VIII. HABAKKUK:

1. **Overview:** The book relates to the very topic we have all thought about at one time. How is it the wicked and ungodly continue to prevail, and the righteous suffer. Habakkuk poses this same question to God as he writes in Israel's most dark time in their history (Manasseh and Ammon). God tells Habakkuk that he is raising up the Chaldeans to punish the ungodly. Habakkuk couldn't not comprehend why God would choose the Chaldeans, but God tells him the just shall live by faith.  
**Habakkuk 1:1-4** Habakkuk poses his question, why?  
**Habakkuk 1:5-11** God is raising up the Chaldeans  
**Habakkuk 1:12-2:1** Habakkuk asks why them.  
**Habakkuk 2:2-4** The just shall live by faith.
2. **Significance:** The just shall live by faith.  
**Romans 1:17** *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*  
**Galatians 3:11** *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.*  
**Hebrews 10:38** *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man drawback, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

## IX. ZEPHANIAH:

1. **Overview:** This was written at the time of Jeremiah and the Babylonian threat. Zephaniah was the forerunner to Jeremiah's message declaring the destruction that God would bring upon all those who continued to practice idolatry. Manasseh and Ammon incorporated the religious worship of all the deities of the day, Chemosh of Phoenicians, Moloch of the Moabites, Baal & Ashtoreth of the Caanites, and Dagon of the Philistines.  
**Zephaniah 1:1-6** *"I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem..."*
2. **Significance:** The remnant of Israel  
**Zephaniah 3:12-13** *"...The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity..."*

## X. HAGGAI:

1. **Overview:** After the exile, the Jews began to rebuild the temple. When they finished the foundation the was a great celebration. The Samaritans heard the celebration and wanted to help. The Jews refused to allow them to help. In relation, the frustrated the temple work till it stopped altogether. After 15 years, Haggai preaches a series of 3 sermons that sparked a renewed vigor to build the temple.
2. **Significance:** Rebuilding of the temple.  
**Haggai 1:7-9** *"My house is a waste..."*

## XI. ZECHARIAH:

1. Overview: Zechariah continues the ministry of Haggai. The first 4 chapters are the restoration of the temple and Judah. The rest of his prophecies are futuristic restoration of Israel as a kingdom and the enemies are destroyed.  
**Zechariah 4:9** *“have laid the foundation of this house, his hands shall also finish it.”*
2. Significance: Zechariah prophesies of Judah's betrayal of Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.  
**Zechariah 11:10-14 (13)** *“cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized. And I too the thirty pieces of silver...”*  
**Matthew 27:9** *“Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying...”*  
**Jeremiah 32:6-9** *“Buy my field, I pray thee...”*

## XII. MALACHI:

1. Overview: Malachi is not a name, but a title meaning messenger. Malachi brings a new form of Jewish writing. Influenced by the Grecian culture he asks a question and then provides a response. His writing criticizes Israel for their lack of heart in its religious worship.  
**Malachi 1:6-14** *“and ye brought that which is torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering...”*
2. Significance: End of Malachi prophesies the sign of the coming of the Lord.  
**Malachi 4:4-6** *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet...”*  
**Luke 1:67-79** *“And thou child, shalt be called the prophet of the highest...”*