

# The Minor Prophets

*Chronological order*

O  
B  
A  
D  
I  
A  
H

J  
O  
E  
L

J  
O  
N  
A  
H

845 - 760 B.C.

Pre-Assyrian  
Prophets

A  
M  
O  
S

H  
O  
S  
E  
A

M  
I  
C  
A  
H

755 - 725 B.C.

Assyrian  
Domination

N  
A  
H  
U  
M

Z  
E  
P  
H  
A  
N  
I  
A  
H

H  
A  
B  
A  
K  
K  
U  
K

660 - 609 B.C.

The Rise  
of Babylon

H  
A  
G  
G  
A  
I

Z  
E  
C  
H  
A  
R  
I  
A  
H

M  
A  
L  
A  
C  
H  
I

520 - 425 B.C.

Post  
Exile

# ZEPHANIAH

- “Prophet of Universal Judgment”
- Descendant of Judah’s King Hezekiah
- Preached in the time of Josiah, in the early years of the boy-king’s reign, before the revival of 621 BC

Structure of this book reflects the common elements in the books of all the minor prophets:

Starts with words of warning to the living/current generation  
Judgment on Judah 1:1 – 2:3

Moves on to announce a coming judgment  
Judgment on the Nations 2:4-15

Adds an invitation to the living to repent and be restored  
Jerusalem's Future: Near Judgment 3:1-7

Concludes with a portrait of the distant future  
Jerusalem's Future: Eternal Kingdom 3:8-20

# HAGGAI

- Spoke to the tiny Jewish community that had settled in the Promised Land after the Babylonian Captivity
- Jewish tradition suggests he was a priest
- Unlike a lot of the prophets, he actually saw a response to his words
- Rebuilding the temple linked to the “shaking of the nations”, the coming of the promised Messiah and His kingdom
- Each of his messages is carefully dated
  - I. August 29, 520 BC 1:1-15
  - II. October 17, 520 BC 2:1-9
  - III. December 18, 520 BC 2:10-19
  - IV. December 18, 520 BC 2:20-23

## First Message:

- People returned to Judah in 538 BC, sixteen years before Haggai first spoke out
- Though the people quickly laid the foundation of the temple, they spent the next decade + using the funds set aside for the temple rebuild to build their own grand houses and clearing the fields for crops (self-preservation); they forgot the call to put God first
- Haggai's message was a call to recommitment
- God worked in the hearts of His people and, within the month, work on the temple was resumed

## Second Message: Words of encouragement from God

- Glory of their temple would be greater than Solomon's temple – fulfilled when Jesus, God Himself, came to that temple to preach
- The funds for the rebuild and decorations would be provided – as King Cyrus had commanded that the temple be rebuilt when he sent the exiles home, the then King Darius ordered that the full cost was to be paid by the royal treasury, through taxes collected from the enemies of the Jewish people (Ezra 6:1-12)
- “Be strong, all you people of the land....For I am with you’ says the Lord Almighty” (Haggai 2:4)

### Third Message:

Even when we are fully committed to the Lord and express that commitment in obedience, the blessings we experience are not merited, but evidence of the overwhelming grace of God, His choosing to bless us

### Last Message:

Upon their return from exile, the little district of Judah was one of 120 great provinces of the Persian Empire, not its own kingdom as before the Captivity. Therefore, Zerubbabel, though of royal line, was not its king. However, God promised that He would honor His ancient covenants, that the Messiah would come and restore God's people.

# ZECHARIAH

The prophet of hope

Spoke to Judah's returning exiles at the same time as Haggai

Used by God to stimulate the completion of the temple



## Part I

- |      |                                |            |
|------|--------------------------------|------------|
| I.   | Introduction: A Call to Return | 1:1-6      |
| II.  | Eight Visions and Oracles      | 1:7 – 6:15 |
| III. | Messages on Fasting            | 7:1 – 8:19 |
| IV.  | Conclusion: Longing for God    | 8:20-23    |

## Part II

- |     |                           |              |
|-----|---------------------------|--------------|
| I.  | God's Intervention        | 9:1 – 11:17  |
| II. | Final Intervention of God | 12:1 – 14:21 |

Though I scatter them among the peoples, yet in distant lands they will remember Me. They and their children will survive, and they will return. And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on Me, the One they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child and grieve bitterly for Him as one grieves for a firstborn son. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city.

Zechariah 10:9, 12:10, 14:2

Each of the above verses were spoken *after* the exiles had, in large part, already returned to Jerusalem. Zechariah saw essentially the same future for Judah that the earlier prophets had seen but was warning them that the “interlude” in Babylon had not completely fulfilled the warnings. Zechariah’s generation could see themselves in the portrait of judgment and restoration, yet the ultimate fulfillment of the prophetic Word looked beyond their experience (“law of double reference”).

“The fact that the warnings, promises, and principles found in the pre-exilic prophets are also found in the post-exilic prophets should not surprise us. No experience up until Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming can exhaust the meaning of these prophets’ words. ‘The ultimate focus of all prophecy is the time of the End.’” (Lawrence O Richards, *The Teacher’s Commentary*)

# MALACHI

- |                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| I. The Chosen People       | 1:1-5      |
| II. Neglect God            | 1:6 – 2:9  |
| III. Break Commitments     | 2:10-16    |
| IV. Doubt God's Presence   | 2:17 – 3:5 |
| V. Deny God's Significance | 3:6 – 4:3  |
| VI. Closing Exhortation    | 4:4-6      |



- Last OT prophet
- Ministered in Judah between 460 BC and 430 BC; 115 years after the return of Judah from Babylon
- Temple was completed; people followed prescribed rituals and offered required sacrifices
- The Lord speaks in 42 of the 55 verses in this book
- God's people had lost their vision of God, and of their own future; they had forgotten their destiny
- Malachi ends the book with an acknowledgement that there were individuals who "listened and heard", and a promise that "the day is coming" when destiny will come for both those who choose God and those who don't.

Book begins with an affirmation: “‘I have loved you,’ says the Lord”; Judah questions “How have You loved us?”

God’s answer points to the fact that He chose their ancestor Jacob over his twin brother, Esau, ancestor of the peoples who surrounded Judah; “Esau I have hated”, the terminology found in v 3, was used by a father to legally designate one son to inherit his possessions while decisively rejecting the claim of another. But, by custom, such a “rejected” son really was loved and was given resources to make his own way, whereas the legally “loved” son inherited.

God has shown His love for us in that He has chosen us to inherit all that He has and is, for we are His people, and He is our God.

God's people have refused to honor Him; they have despised God's name. The people of Judah respond, "How have we despised Your Name?"

God's answer simply pointed to the mildewed bread and ill and/or injured animals offered as sacrifices. The priests and Levites were unsatisfied with their "portions" because they weren't the better ones which were to be for God. The people were bored with worship and they sought to swindle God out of what they had vowed to Him

True worship honors and exalts God's Name, honoring and praising Him for Himself.

God reminded Judah that in the Sinai Covenant He promised the obedient that He would bless them; the Law outlined His plan for holy living.

The very priests charged with teaching God's way denied it in their actions and in their distorted teaching of God's Truth. The people were cruel to one another, both family and nonfamily alike. They also persisted in marrying pagan wives who worshiped foreign gods and adopted divorce motivated by lust as a lifestyle.



Malachi charged that Judah had “wearied the Lord with your words”; met with sarcastic inquiry “How have we wearied Him?”

Humanistic values had replaced God’s definition of goodness and purity; society slipped into the practice of calling evil good.

God confronts Judah with a call to restoration “‘Return to Me, and I will return to you,’ says the Lord Almighty”; people’s response was tantamount to saying, “What do You mean, return? Why, we’ve never strayed!”

Judah had been robbing God of the tithes and offerings commanded by the Law they did not put God first in their lives

God called Judah to account for setting Him aside as irrelevant, for only going through the motions for the sake of appearances

Lutheran Hour Ministries

“No Longer Exiles”

Dr. Kari Vo

16 August 2022

Is 66:18b, 19b-21

Do you know what an exile is? It is someone who lives far away from home, who can never go back.

It's a special kind of grief, living in exile. Many ancient people used it as a kind of punishment, the pain goes so deep. And the people of Judah had good reason to know that pain. They were scattered when Jerusalem fell, and their enemies took them far, far away and scattered them among the nations. They never expected to see home again.

But now the Lord announces a miracle: the exiles will come home again... They will come home to be priests of the Lord, serving the God who redeemed them. They will be home – this time, forever.

Coming home where we belong. This is what the Lord wants for you – for me – for all of us. The whole human race has been exiled since very early on – ever since we rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden, since we turned our backs on Him and tried to build a life without Him. But now we know: there is no such life. The Lord is our life, and our home, and our happiness. How we need Him!

....We need someone to fetch us, to heal our wounds, to bring us home again. And that is what Jesus has done for us.

He left heaven and went searching for us, lost as we were. He called us back to the Lord with everything He said and did. And because He knew that words wouldn't be enough, He lay down His own life to bring us back to God – to carry us safely to the Father, forgiven and loved and home again. Now everyone who trusts in Him *is* home, home forever – living with the everlasting, joyful life of the Savior who rose from the dead to make us God's own.