

The Minor Prophets

*Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah,
Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah,
Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*



Pieter Lastman. *Jonah and the Whale* (oil on oak), 1621.
Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, Germany.

with

Dr. Bill Creasy

Copyright © 2020 by Logos Educational Corporation.

All rights reserved. No part of this course—audio, video, photography, maps, timelines or other media—may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage or retrieval devices without permission in writing or a licensing agreement from the copyright holder.

Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

The Minor Prophets,

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah,
Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi

Traditional Dates Written: 8th century – 5th century B.C.

Traditional Periods Covered: 8th century – 5th century B.C.

Traditional Authors: As titled

General Introduction

This general introduction to the prophets first appeared in the syllabi for “The Major Prophets, Part 1” and “The Major Prophets, Part 2.” The “Minor Prophets” introduction for this course begins on page 12.

The Hebrew Scriptures (or the Old Testament) feature three main characters: *king*, *priest* and *prophet*. Of course, God is to be Israel’s king: in the beginning, God makes an irrevocable covenant with Israel; he leads the Israelites out of Egypt in the Exodus; reaffirms the covenant at Mount Sinai; tests the Israelites throughout their 40-year wilderness experience; and finally, under Joshua’s leadership, moves them into the land of Canaan—the “Promised Land”—where they dislodge (to some degree) the indigenous people who live there: the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites (Judges 3: 5-6).

With the death of Joshua and his generation, however, the Israelites quickly fall far from God, ignoring the covenant, intermarrying with the indigenous people, and serving their gods. A steep cycle of decline begins, and with each turn of the cycle, the nation spirals lower and lower, until by the end of the book of Judges, around 1050 B.C.: “*There was no king in Israel [including God]; everyone did what was right in their own sight*” (21: 25).

With each cycle of decline God raises a “Judge.” In the book of Judges, we meet 13 Judges, but they are not judicial figures, they are military or political leaders (although Deborah—the only woman judge—serves both judicial and military functions). Theoretically, Judges were to emerge at a time of crisis, address the crisis, and then return to their ordinary lives as farmers and shepherds. But, of course, when people are given power (or take it), they are loath to give it up, so as time goes by the judges become more and more corrupt, clinging to power and position. By 1 Samuel the people are fed up with the corrupt judges, and they demand a king, “*like all the other nations, to rule us*” (8: 5).

The King

The people choose Saul, son of Kish, a Benjamite, to reign as Israel's first king, 1050-1010 B.C. Although Saul *looks* like a king, he doesn't have the *heart* of a king, and Saul fails miserably at the job, quickly descending into paranoia and madness, and opening the door for the dashing and heroic young David to replace him. With the death of Saul and his three sons—Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua—at the battle of Mount Gilboa, David steps through the door, reigning as king from 1010-970 B.C. Through brilliant (and sometimes brutal) political maneuvering and warfare, David forges a loose confederation of twelve tribes into a united monarchy, elevating them to a position of regional power. David is Israel's ideal king: he is a magnificent warrior, a brilliant king and a profound man of God . . . but a deeply flawed man, as well, fully human in his loves and hates, his passions and desires, his foibles and failures.

With David's death, his son Solomon becomes king, and he reigns from 970-930 B.C. Solomon inherits David's united monarchy, and Solomon overlays the monarchy with a brilliant administrative structure, for the most part ignoring tribal boundaries and loyalties. Through strategic alliances with other kings and tribal warlords, Solomon vertically integrates the entire economy of his day, controlling not only the food production center of Egypt, but the land and maritime distribution routes, as well. As a result, under Solomon's reign Israel dominates the biblical world, generating enormous wealth in the process.

But Solomon's reign quickly produces internal conflict and incipient rebellion, as well. Due to the burdensome taxes imposed on his people and the hated practice of *corvée* (unpaid, conscripted labor), upon Solomon's death civil war breaks out. Jeroboam, leader of the rebel forces, rallies the northern tribes against Solomon's son Rehoboam, who leads the lone tribe of Judah, the house of David. The civil war is a disaster: the northern tribes become the nation of Israel, with its capital at Samaria, while the southern tribe of Judah becomes the nation of Judah, with its capital at Jerusalem. The civil war rages for nearly 80 years, fracturing the united monarchy into shards of splintered glass and inviting invasion from the surrounding nations and tribal peoples.

With Solomon's death, the united monarchy collapses. Nineteen kings will rule in the northern kingdom of Israel; twenty kings will rule in the southern kingdom of Judah.

Here's the list:

Northern Kingdom of Israel

1. Jeroboam I (930-909)
2. Nadab (909-908)
3. Baasha (908-886)
4. Elah (886-885)
5. Zimri (885-7 *days*)
6. Omri (885-874)
7. Ahab (874-853)
8. Ahaziah (853-852)
9. Joram (852-841)
10. Jehu (841-814)

11. Jehoahaz (814-798)
12. Jehoash (798-782)
13. Jeroboam II (782-753)
14. Zechariah (753-752)
15. Shallum (752-1 *month*)
16. Menahem (752-742)
17. Pekahiah (742-740)
18. Pekah (740-732)
19. Hoshea (732-721)

Southern Kingdom of Judah

1. Rehoboam (930-913)
2. Abijah (913-910)
3. Asa (910-869)

4. Jehoshaphat (869-848)

5. Jehoram (848-841)
6. Ahaziah (841)
7. Athaliah (841-835)
8. Joash (835-796)
9. Amaziah (796-767)
10. Uzziah (767-740)

11. Jotham (740-735)
12. Ahaz (735-715)
13. Hezekiah (715-686)
14. Manasseh (786-642)
15. Amon (642-640)
16. Josiah (640-609)
17. Jehoahaz (609-3 *months*)
18. Jehoiakim (609-598)
19. Jehoiachin (598-597)
20. Zedekiah (597-686)

1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles tell the story of the kings of Israel and Judah, a tale that spans 1050-586 B.C., nearly half a millennium. It is a sprawling story that provides the historical and narrative context for the prophets, for all of the prophets live and work during the time of the kings and shortly afterward. What they have to say has its immediate application during the prophets' own time and place.

The Priests

God creates Israel's priesthood during Israel's wilderness years (1446-1406 B.C.) by appointing Moses' older brother Aaron, as High Priest, and Aaron's sons—Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar—as priests (Exodus 28: 1). The priesthood is then restricted to the patrilineal descendants of Aaron, scion of the tribe of Levi.

By definition, a priest in Scripture speaks to God on behalf of the people, and he ministers to the people by offering sacrifices to God on their behalf: the burnt offering, grain offering, fellowship (or “peace”) offering, sin offering and guilt offering (Leviticus 1-5). Israel's priests serve at the Tabernacle (1446-959 B.C.), Solomon's Temple (959-586 B.C.) and the Second Temple (516 B.C.-A.D. 70) until the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple in A.D. 70. Today in Judaism, priests [כֹּהֲנִים, *kohanim*] continue in the Kohen families of rabbinical Judaism, although they have no official function in a synagogue. In Orthodox communities, however, it is customary to have a *kohan* read the first of three readings at daily synagogue services (on Mondays and Thursdays) and the first of seven readings on *Shabbat*, the Sabbath. A *kohan* may also be called upon in Orthodox services to offer the “priestly blessing” (the בְּרַכַּת כֹּהֲנִים, *birkat kohanim*), head covered and hands held aloft in the “priestly blessing” gesture (like the Vulcan salutation given by Mr. Spock (Leonard Nimoy, the Jewish actor) in Star Trek, who copied it from an Orthodox rabbi!).

In biblical Judaism, the priests enjoy high status among the people and their leaders, and they often work hand-in-hand with court officials to advance the king's agenda. Given their status and position, however, priests easily became corrupt. Jeremiah, himself a priest as well as a prophet, excoriates the corrupt leaders and priests of his day, saying: “The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests teach on their own authority; yet my people *love* it this way” (5: 31); “small and great alike, all are greedy for gain, prophet and priest, all practice fraud” (6: 13). And we read in Jeremiah that “the priest Pashhur, son of Immer, chief officer in the house of the Lord, heard Jeremiah prophesying . . . so he struck the prophet and put him in the stocks at the upper Gate of Benjamin in the house of the Lord” (20: 1-2). And, of course, in New Testament times Caiaphas the High Priest works hand-in-hand with the Roman authorities, having Jesus arrested, beaten, tried and handed over to Pontius Pilate, demanding that Jesus be crucified.

More often than not, priests in the Hebrew Scriptures support the status quo, currying favor with the kings and their court officials. “Good” priests in Scripture are few and far between.

The Prophets

As a priest speaks to God on behalf of the people, the prophet speaks to the people on behalf of God. A prophet is necessarily confrontational, typically confronting both priests and kings. Prophets come in two types: oral prophets and writing prophets. Oral prophets like Elijah and Elisha are great prophets, but they don't write a single word. Elijah, for example, confronts the corrupt king of Israel, Ahab; his vile, loathsome and despicable wife, Jezebel; and the army of prophets of Baal whom they employ. In the climax of the story, Elijah takes on four hundred prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, taunting them as they call on Baal, and finally himself calling down fire from heaven and thunderously defeating them all . . . after which, Elijah butchers them! Elisha, too, makes enemies of kings, both foreign and domestic. Both are great prophets, but they are not writers.

Of the writing prophets, we have sixteen: four major prophets and twelve minor prophets. Importantly, major prophets are not more important than minor prophets; major prophets are major because their books are *long*, while minor prophets are minor because their books are *short*.

Major Prophets

Isaiah (66 chapters)
Jeremiah (52)
 Lamentations (5)
Ezekiel (48)
Daniel (12, or 14 in the Deutero-canon)

Minor Prophets

Hosea (14 chapters)
Joel (4)
Amos (9)
Obadiah (1)
Jonah (4)
Micah (7)
Nahum (3)
Habakkuk (3)
Zephaniah (3)
Haggai (2)
Zechariah (14)
Malachi (3)

Lamentations is only five chapters long, but it is written by Jeremiah, so it is included with him. Daniel is a special case. The Jewish canon includes Daniel among the *Ketuvim*, the "Writings," not among the *Nevi-im*, the "Prophets," for Daniel is an altogether a different genre of composition. The book of Daniel was written sometime during the 2nd century B.C, although its story is set in Babylon during the Babylonian captivity, 605-539 B.C. Daniel is a young man of the royal house of David who is taken captive from Jerusalem to Babylon in 605 B.C., and he serves at the court of king Nebuchadnezzar. The story fits neatly into the apocalyptic genre, and it combines

prophecy with “end-time” (or eschatological) visions. Daniel differs greatly from the other major and minor prophets, all of whom speak into their own historical context. The Christian canon of the Hebrew Scriptures moves Daniel from the *Ketuvim* to the Major Prophets—a companion to Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel—primarily because Daniel was an especially important book to Jesus, who identified closely with it, understanding himself to be the “Son of Man,” referenced in Daniel 7:

*“As the visions during the night continued,
I saw coming with the clouds of heaven
One like a **son of man**.
When he reached the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him,
He received dominion, splendor, and kingship;
all nations, peoples and tongues will serve him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that shall not pass away,
his kingship, one that shall not be destroyed.”*

(7: 13-14)

In the Olivet Discourse—Jesus’ words on the “end times”—he alludes to Daniel, as well, saying:

*“When you see the desolating abomination **spoken of through Daniel the prophet** [Daniel 9: 27; 11: 31; 12: 11] standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, a person on the housetop must not go down to get things out of his house, a person in the field must not return to get his cloak. Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days. Pray that your flight not be in winter or on the Sabbath, for at that time there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will be. And if those days had not been shortened, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect they will be shortened.”*

(Matthew 24: 15-22)

And finally, at Jesus’ trial before the Sanhedrin, the high priest cuts to the chase, demanding a clear answer from Jesus, saying: “I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God” (Matthew 26: 63). And Jesus replies, alluding directly to Daniel 7: 13-14—

*“You have said so [σὺ εἶπας]. But I tell you:
From now on you will see ‘the Son of Man
seated at the right hand of the Power’
and ‘coming on the clouds of heaven.’”*

(Matthew 26: 64)

That gets Jesus a death sentence.

The book of Daniel plays a central role in Jesus' self-identity, and consequently it goes on to play a central role in Christian apocalyptic or "end time" thinking. Thus, the Christian canon elevates Daniel to the status of a major prophet.

Importantly, all prophets speak into their own historical context, addressing issues that are *current* in their own day. A prophet is emphatically NOT a fortune teller, someone who looks down the dim corridor of time and says: "I see Jesus coming; he'll be born in Bethlehem 500 years from now!" A prophet always—100% of the time—speaks into his own historical context. That's his job.

When Moses is about to die in the book of Deuteronomy, he says to the Israelites:

"A prophet like me will the LORD, your God, raise up for you from among your own kindred; that is the one to whom you shall listen."

(18: 15)

But how would the people know if a person claiming to be a prophet actually is one? *Anyone* can claim to be a prophet . . . and turn out to be a phony, a "false" prophet. So, Moses replies:

"If a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD but the word does not come true, it is a word the LORD did not speak. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; do not fear him."

(18: 22)

So, if what the prophet says doesn't come true for another 500 years, how would the prophet's audience know to believe him? Consequently, what the prophet says *must* come true within the lifetime of his audience, or shortly thereafter.

Isaiah offers a perfect example. Isaiah operates as a prophet during the reigns of kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah; that is, 740-686 B.C. During the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah (735-715 B.C.), Israel in the north had formed an alliance with Aram (Syria) to their north. Together Aram and Israel seek to conquer Ahaz and the southern kingdom of Judah.

It's 735 B.C. (the beginning of his reign) and Ahaz is terrified, knowing that he cannot defeat the northern alliance. God sends Isaiah to tell Ahaz not to fear them, for Ahaz has a much bigger problem on his hands: the Assyrian Empire (northern Iraq of today) is on the rise, and they will obliterate both Aram and Israel . . . then they'll come after Judah. Ahaz doesn't believe Isaiah, so he demands a sign . . . and Isaiah gives him one:

*“Listen, house of David! Is it not enough that you weary human beings? Must you also weary my God? **Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign, the young woman, pregnant and about to bear a son, shall name him Emmanuel.** Curds and honey he will eat so that he may learn to reject evil and choose good; for before the child learns to reject evil and choose good, the land of those two kings whom you dread shall be deserted.”*

(7: 13-16)

Isaiah 7: 14 is traditionally translated: “Behold, a **virgin** shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel” (KJV). And that’s how Matthew understands it when he writes of Jesus’ birth:

*“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘Behold, the **virgin** shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,’ which means ‘God is with us.’”*

(1: 22-23)

The Hebrew word translated “virgin” is עַלְמָה [al-mah’] and it merely means “young woman,” not necessarily a physiological “virgin” (although in Isaiah’s and Matthew’s day the two were nearly synonymous). But Isaiah is not looking 735 years down the corridor of time, predicting the birth of Jesus. He is speaking of his immediate future, when the sign he gave will be fulfilled. And it is fulfilled in the very next chapter of Isaiah:

*“The LORD said to me: Take a large tablet, and inscribe on it with an ordinary stylus, ‘belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz,’ and call reliable witnesses for me, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah, son of Jeberechiah. **Then I [Isaiah] went to the prophetess [Mrs. Isaiah] and she conceived and bore a son.** The LORD said to me: Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz, for before the child learns to say, ‘My father, my mother,’ the wealth of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria shall be carried off by the king of Assyria.”*

(8: 1-4)

So, Mrs. Isaiah (an עַלְמָה al-mah’) gives birth to a son, and before that boy can say “Papa” or “Mama,” before he knows right from wrong (traditionally at 12 years old), Aram and Israel will not even exist. And sure enough, Assyria conquers both Aram and Israel in 722 B.C., 12 years after Maher-shalal-hash-baz is born. The child’s name is symbolic, by the way, meaning “quick spoils, speedy plunder,” exactly what Assyria gets from Aram and Israel. So, Isaiah’s prophecy in 7: 14 is literally fulfilled only one chapter later, in 8: 3.

The early Christians understood that Isaiah’s prophecy in 7: 14 was literally fulfilled in 8: 3, but they read this fulfilled prophecy as foreshadowing an even greater fulfillment in their day. As the עַלְמָה [al-mah’] (Mrs. Isaiah, the “young woman”) conceived and gave

birth to a son in Isaiah, so in the manner of “stepped up parallelism,” does the Virgin Mary [παρθένος, *par-the'-nos*, a physiological virgin] conceive and give birth to a son, Jesus. We see fulfilled prophecy in the Hebrew Scriptures foreshadowing events in the New Testament hundreds of times. So, Old Testament prophecy does not predict events in the New Testament; rather, fulfilled prophecy in the Old Testament foreshadows events in the New Testament. In the literary world, this foreshadowing is called “intertextuality,” and we’ll explore it in-depth in our three courses on the Major and Minor Prophets: Isaiah and Jeremiah; Ezekiel and Daniel; and the “Book of the Twelve.”

All of the writing prophets operate during the time of the kings, so it’s important to understand the historical context into which they write if we’re to understand their books. Here are the prophets associated with their corresponding kings:

Northern Kingdom of Israel

1. Jeroboam I (930-909)
2. Nadab (909-908)
3. Baasha (908-886)
4. Elah (886-885)
5. Zimri (885-7 *days*)
6. Omri (885-874)
7. Ahab (874-853) Elijah, Elisha (oral)
8. Ahaziah (853-852)
9. Joram (852-841)
10. Jehu (841-814)
11. Jehoahaz (814-798)
12. Jehoash (798-782)
13. Jeroboam II (782-753) Hosea
14. Zechariah (753-752)
15. Shallum (752-1 *month*)
16. Menahem (752-742)
17. Pekahiah (742-740)
18. Pekah (740-732)
19. Hoshea (732-721)

Southern Kingdom of Judah

1. Rehoboam (930-913)
2. Abijah (913-910)
3. Asa (910-869)
4. Jehoshaphat (869-848)
5. Jehoram (848-841)
6. Ahaziah (841)
7. Athaliah (841-835)
8. Joash (835-796)
9. Amaziah (796-767)
10. Uzziah (767-740) Amos/Jonah
Micah
Isaiah
11. Jotham (740-735)
12. Ahaz (735-715)
13. Hezekiah (715-686)
14. Manasseh (786-642)
15. Amon (642-640)
16. Josiah (640-609) Nahum/Zephaniah
Habakkuk/Joel
Jeremiah/Daniel
17. Jehoahaz (609-3 *months*)
18. Jehoiakim (609-598)
19. Jehoiachin (598-597)
20. Zedekiah (597-586) Ezekiel/Obadiah
Haggai (c. 520)
Zechariah (c.520)
Malachi (c. 460)

The “Book of the Twelve” or the “Minor Prophets”

In this course, we will be studying the “Minor Prophets”: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. St. Augustine dubbed them the “minor” prophets, from the Latin *minor*, meaning “shorter” (*City of God*, XVIII, 29). Thus, the minor prophets are “minor,” not because they are less important than the four major prophets, but because they are significantly shorter in length: Isaiah consists of sixty-six chapters, Jonah, four; Jeremiah consists of fifty-two chapters, Obadiah, one. Although our bibles follow the standard canonical order of the minor prophets, we will study them in three groups: 1) those prophets who speak into the historical context of the Assyrian threat to Israel and Judah: Amos, Hosea, Micah and Jonah; 2) those who speak into the historical context of the Babylonian threat to Judah: Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Joel and Obadiah; and 3) those who speak into the historical context of the return from Babylonian captivity: Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

The Assyrian Threat to Israel and Judah

Amos

Amos lived in the southern kingdom of Judah and he opens his book by giving us its historical context: “The words of Amos, who was one of the sheep breeders from Tekoa, which he received in a vision concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah (767-740 B.C.), and in the days of Jeroboam II (782-753 B.C.), son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake” (1: 1).^{*} Although living in the southern kingdom of Judah, Amos prophesied at Bethel in the northern kingdom of Israel during the prosperous years of Jeroboam II. His words are a scathing indictment of Israel’s hypocrisy and injustice and a bold attack on the king, the priests and the community leaders. Amaziah, a priest of Bethel, reports Amos to the king, and Amaziah evicts Amos from Bethel, chasing him out of town . . . but not before Amos gets in the last word:

“Thus says the LORD [to the priest Amaziah]:

*‘Your wife shall become a prostitute in the city,
and your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword.
Your land shall be parceled out by measuring line,
and you yourself shall die in an unclean land;
and Israel shall be exiled from its land.’”*

(Amos 7: 17)

^{*} A massive 7.8 - 8.2 earthquake occurred around 760 B.C. It was so severe that the prophet Zechariah vividly recalls it over 200 years later, when he writes: “You will flee as you fled because of the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah” (Zechariah 14: 5).

Hosea

Hosea lived in the northern kingdom of Israel, and like Amos, he opens his book by giving us its historical context: “The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, son of Joash, king of Israel” (1: 1). These are the very same years in which the southern prophet Isaiah operates, 740-686 B.C. Hosea began his work in the north in the last years of Jeroboam II (782-753 B.C.), years of great prosperity. However, Jeroboam’s death triggered enormous political instability and economic collapse. Jeroboam’s son Zechariah reigned for only six months (753-752 B.C.) until Shallum, an officer in his own army, assassinated him; Shallum then reigned for one month (752 B.C.) before Menahem, another of Zechariah’s officers, assassinated him. Menahem then reigned for ten years (752-742 B.C.). But he was a thug, one who brutally suppressed his own people. During a revolt in Tappuah (modern-day Taffuh, a Palestinian town about five miles west of Hebron), Menahem slaughtered the entire population, and “even ripped open the pregnant women” (2 Kings 15: 16). During Menahem’s reign, the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (“Pul” in scripture) came against Israel, and Menahem paid him one thousand talents of silver (roughly \$16 *billion* in today’s currency!) to help Menahem cling to power. Under Menahem, the Assyrian Empire established a political and military foothold in Israel, marking the beginning of the end of the northern kingdom.

Micah

Like Amos and Hosea, Micah is a contemporary of the great prophet Isaiah, and Micah also opens his book by providing its historical context: “The word of the LORD which came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (740-686 B.C.), which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem” (1: 1). The only reference to Micah outside of his own book is in Jeremiah (626-586 B.C.). After Jeremiah stands in front of the temple in Jerusalem and forecasts its doom and destruction, he is arrested. The priests and the other prophets want him put to death, but cooler heads prevail, saying: “This man [Jeremiah] does not deserve a death sentence . . . Micah of Moresheth used to prophesy in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and he said to all the people of Judah: Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Zion shall be plowed as a field,/ Jerusalem, a heap of ruins,/ and the temple mount,/ a forest ridge’” (26: 16-18). Back in his day, Micah wasn’t put to death for what he said, and that gets Jeremiah off the hook.

The book of Micah consists of two major sections, each with two parts: 1) in the first section (1: 2 – 5: 14), chapters 1-3 speak of punishment, and chapters 4-5 speak of redemption; and 2) in the second section (6: 1 – 7: 20), 6: 1 – 7: 6 speak of punishment, and 7: 7-20 speak of redemption.

Unlike the great prophet Isaiah who lived in Jerusalem, Micah was an outsider, living in Moresheth, a village about five miles southeast of the Philistine city of Gath, home of Goliath in David’s day. Doubtless, Jerusalem insiders—the priests and royal officials—

would have viewed Micah with suspicion and some degree of contempt, while Micah views the insiders as corrupt and worthy of judgment.

Jonah

Unlike scripture's other prophetic books, Jonah is not a collection of oracles, but a short story, bristling with irony and uproarious humor. Everyone loves the story of Jonah and the big fish! Our story begins with God calling Jonah to go to Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian Empire, the very empire that would destroy the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. and attack the southern kingdom of Judah in 701 B.C. Once in Nineveh, Jonah is to preach to the Ninevites and convince them to repent and be "saved." But that is the last thing Jonah wants, for Jonah *hates* the Ninevites, and he wants them all dead! So, instead of traveling 800 miles east by land to Nineveh (near modern-day Mosul, Iraq), Jonah sets sail 1,900 miles *west* from Joppa to Tarshish (perhaps ancient Carthage)—the *exact opposite direction*, as far away from Nineveh as he can get!

Well, we all know what happens: Jonah becomes lunch for a big fish. But apparently Jonah was not as tasty as the fish would have liked, and the fish vomits Jonah onto dry land at Joppa—the exact place from which he started out. Jonah then reluctantly makes his way to Nineveh, where (low and behold!) Jonah preaches to the Ninevites . . . and they all repent. Dang! Jonah fumes and fusses, but all to no avail.

The story of Jonah characterizes the narrow-minded Israel-centric view of the prophets, in which God focuses solely on Israel and the Jews, ignoring—or perhaps holding in contempt—the rest of humanity, the *goyim*. In this remarkable story, Jonah presents a tale of God's universal love and concern, a story quite unlike anything else we find in the prophets.

Although the story of Jonah is *set* during the eighth-century B.C., it was probably written in the postexilic period, perhaps as a satire on the nationalistic and ethnocentric reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Babylonian Threat to Judah

Nahum

At its peak, the Neo-Assyrian Empire (911-609 B.C.) was the largest and most powerful empire on the face of the earth, extending from the Caucasus Mountains in the north, to Egypt, Arabia and Nubia in the south, to central Persia in the east, and the Mediterranean coastal plain in the west . . . over half a million square miles. Assyria was the world's first great empire, an empire built by ruthless conquest. The Assyrian war machine was the most efficient and brutal military force in the ancient world, with a professional standing army, iron weapons, exceptional engineering skills, and brutal tactics. For

example, Ashurnasirpal II was king of Assyria from 883 to 859 B.C. Here's a sample of his exploits:

*“In strife and conflict, I besieged [and] conquered the city. I felled 3,000 of their fighting men with the sword . . . I captured many troops alive: I cut off some of their arms [and] hands; I cut off of others their noses, ears [and] extremities. I gouged out the eyes of many troops, I made one pile of the living [and] one of heads. I hung their heads on trees around the city.”**

Israel experienced just such treatment when its capital of Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 722 B.C. and Judah nearly experienced the same when the Assyrians attacked Jerusalem in 701 B.C. It's no wonder then, that Nahum utters a vicious prophecy against Assyria's hated capital city of Nineveh shortly before Nineveh falls to a coalition of Babylonians and Medes in 612 B.C. In Nahum's mind, the fall of Nineveh is divine justice: what goes around, comes around, and it sets the stage for the Babylonian period in Scripture.

Zephaniah

Like the earlier prophets, Zephaniah gives us the historical context for his prophecy: “The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah, the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah (640-609 B.C.),” (1: 1). We remember Josiah for the religious reforms that he and Jeremiah had launched in the latter years of Josiah's reign, but in the early years the Assyrians still exerted considerable influence in the affairs of Judah and Jerusalem. Zephaniah speaks into this earlier context, somewhat overlapping with the prophet Jeremiah.

Zephaniah foresees doom and destruction for Judah and Jerusalem as “the day of the Lord” comes swiftly upon them, a time of divine judgment for their religious apostasy and corruption.

Habakkuk

Habakkuk is the prophet with a question mark for a brain: “How long, O Lord, must I cry for help and you do not listen? Or cry out to you, ‘Violence!’ and you do not intervene?” (1: 2). Habakkuk writes between the Babylonian victory over the Egyptians at the Battle of Carchemish (605 B.C.) and the Fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.). His short book (three chapters, fifty-six verses, in total) begins as a dialogue between Habakkuk and God, with Habakkuk asking the questions and God responding. Habakkuk has serious questions about God's justice, exceeded only by those of Job himself. In the end, though, Habakkuk concludes with a song of praise to God.

* Albert Kirk Grayson, [*Assyrian Royal Inscriptions, Part 2: From Tiglath-pileser I to Ashur-nasir-apli II*](#) (Wiesbaden, Germany: Otto Harrassowitz, 1976), p. 126.

Joel

Joel doesn't give us the historical context for his prophecy, but we can infer that it is the Babylonian invasion of Judah and Jerusalem. Using the metaphor of a locust swarm, Joel crafts a vivid picture of drought and of locusts swarming the land, stripping it bare, leaving not a blade of grass. So, the Babylonian invasion will be.

But, as in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Joel then envisions a future Jerusalem, one with abundant rain, fresh crops and a renewed people. In St. Peter's first sermon on Pentecost A.D. 32, Peter quotes Joel 3: 1-5, identifying the newly-born Christian community in Jerusalem as that people (Acts 2: 16-21).

Obadiah

Obadiah is the shortest book among the minor prophets, a single chapter of twenty-one verses, an oracle against Edom. Like Joel, Obadiah doesn't provide the historical context for his oracle, but he clearly utters it after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., during which time the Edomites supported the Babylonians, descended upon Jerusalem and looted it (see Psalm 137: 7).

Obadiah is a bitter cry for vengeance against Israel's long-time enemy, the Edomites.

Those Who Return from Babylonian Captivity

Haggai

Haggai's prophecy addresses the conditions in what is now the province of Judah during the reign of the Persian king, Darius I (522-486 B.C.). Although Zerubbabel led the people back to Judah after Cyrus the Great's decree of 539 B.C., the kingdom of Judah is finished, the Davidic monarchy has ended and the temple is gone. So, who are the Jews and what is their future?

As you'll recall, Zerubbabel and the returned exiles began rebuilding the temple in 538 B.C., but work quickly stopped when confronted by local opposition. Only in 520 B.C. did work resume. That's when Haggai writes his short prophecy, between August and December of 520 B.C.

Zerubbabel was a direct descendant of king David, but under the Persians (and later the Greeks and the Romans) an independent Davidic monarchy would never be restored, so Haggai envisions a Davidic dynasty in the eschatological future, a vision of hope.

Zechariah

Zechariah writes at the same time as Haggai, during work on the second temple, 520-516 B.C. The book of Zechariah consists of two major parts: 1) chapters 1-8; and 2) chapters 9-14. Part one consists of three literary units: 1) an introductory unit that links Zechariah's prophecies to those of Haggai (1: 1-6); 2) seven "visions" (1: 7 – 6: 15); and 3) an address to a delegation from Bethel (7: 1-14), followed by seven oracles concerning the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem (8: 1-23).

Part two of Zechariah appears to be written nearly a century later and it consists of an extraordinarily diverse set of oracles in a variety of literary genres that focus on the dire consequences of disobeying God and on a glorious eschatological future, a time in which all people will recognize Jerusalem's central role in God's plan for humanity and acknowledge God's absolute sovereignty.

Malachi

Malachi addresses an audience a few generations after the restoration of the temple, c. 420 B.C. With Jerusalem restored and the temple rebuilt, one would think that a grateful people would thank God and be back on track. But, no! Instead, in Malachi God levels eight accusations against his people: 1) they don't show proper love toward God (1: 2-5); 2) the people dishonor God (1: 6a); 3) the priests hold God in contempt (1: 6b-9); 4) men divorce their wives and take up with other women (2: 13-16); 5) the people blur the difference between right and wrong (2: 17); 6) the people turn their backs on God (3: 6-7a); 7) both people and priests steal from God (3: 7b-12); and 8) the people and priests mock God (3: 13-15).

Malachi's tone is weary, and he promises a reckoning to come.

The Minor Prophets,

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah,
Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi

Syllabus

Week 1 (June 1/2)

Lesson #1: Amos, the Shepherd of Tekoa (1: 1 – 6: 14)



“The Prophet Amos,” (illuminated manuscript, Ms. Ludwig XV 3, fol. 100), c. 1270.
J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Amos lived in the southern kingdom of Judah and he opens his book by giving us its historical context: “The words of Amos, who was one of the sheep breeders from Tekoa, which he received in a vision concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah (767-740 B.C.), and in the days of Jeroboam II (782-753 B.C.), son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake” (1: 1). Although living in the southern kingdom of Judah, Amos prophesied at Bethel in the northern kingdom of Israel during the very prosperous years of Jeroboam II. He is probably the first of the Minor Prophets to speak into the context of the looming Assyrian threat. His words are a scathing indictment of

Israel's hypocrisy and injustice and a bold attack on a self-centered king, the priests and the community leaders.

Lesson #2: Hosea, the Cuckold (1: 1 – 3: 5)



“Hosea and Gomer,” *Bible* (Illuminated manuscript, MS G.60 fol. 473v), c. 1300-1325).
The Morgan Library and Museum, New York.

Hosea lived in the northern kingdom of Israel, and like Amos, he opens his book by giving us its historical context: “The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, son of Joash, king of Israel” (1: 1). These are the very same years in which the southern prophet Isaiah operates, 740-686 B.C. Hosea begins his work in the northern kingdom in the last years of Jeroboam II (782-753 B.C.).

In Hosea's opening chapters, the Lord tells him: “Go, get for yourself a woman of prostitution [זֹנִיָּים, *zaw-noon*, “a whore”] and children of prostitution, for the land prostitutes itself, turning away from the LORD.’ So, he went and took Gomer, daughter of Diblaim; and she conceived and bore him a son” (1: 2-3). That is about the worst job God gives any prophet! Gomer continually betrays Hosea, bearing children . . . but not Hosea's. Hosea's marriage to Gomer is a living allegory of God's experience with Israel.

Week 2 (June 8/9)

Lesson #3: Hosea, God's Spokesman (4: 1 – 14: 10)



“Hosea Preaching to the Israelites,” *Winchester Bible* (Illuminated manuscript, MS 17, fol. 198r), c. 1160-1175). Winchester Cathedral Library, Winchester, England.

Hosea's marriage to Gomer is a mirror of God's marriage to Israel, a marriage that breaks both Hosea's and God's heart. Hosea, chapters four through fourteen, detail the allegory at length, excoriating Israel for its religious apostasy, for worshiping other gods—the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, Baal and Ashtoreth—and for murder, perjury, theft and a host of sexual sins. As the oracles continue, God laments the loss of his bride, pleads for Israel's repentance, promises forgiveness and foretells the fall of Israel to the Assyrian Empire, which indeed happens in 722 B.C.

Lesson #4: Micah (1: 1 – 7: 20)



Lachish relief of Sennacherib condemning the residents of Lachish.
British Museum, London.

[The cuneiform inscription at the top left reads: “Sennacherib, the mighty king, king of the country of Assyria, sitting on the throne of judgment before the city of Lachish. I give permission for its slaughter.”]

Like Amos and Hosea, Micah is a contemporary of the great prophet Isaiah, and Micah also opens his book by providing its historical context: “The word of the LORD which came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (740-686 B.C.), which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem” (1: 1).

The book of Micah consists of two major sections, each with two parts: 1) in the first section (1: 2 – 5: 14), chapters 1-3 speak of punishment, and chapters 4-5 speak of redemption; and 2) in the second section (6: 1 – 7: 20), 6: 1 – 7: 6 speak of punishment, and 7: 7-20 speak of redemption.

Unlike the great prophet Isaiah who lived in Jerusalem, Micah was an outsider, living in Moresheth, a village about five miles southeast of the Philistine city of Gath, home of Goliath in David’s day. Doubtless, Jerusalem’s insiders—the priests and royal officials—would have viewed Micah with suspicion and some degree of contempt, while Micah views the insiders as corrupt and worthy of judgment.

Week 3 (June 15/16)

Lesson #5: Jonah (1: 1 – 4: 11)



“Jonah and the Fish,” (bronze relief on the upper-church door of the Church of the Annunciation), 1969. Nazareth, Israel.

Photo by Ana Maria Vargas

Unlike scripture’s other prophetic books, Jonah is not a collection of oracles, but a short story, bristling with irony and uproarious humor. Everyone loves the story of Jonah and the big fish! Our story begins with God calling Jonah to go to Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian Empire, the very empire that would destroy the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. and attack the southern kingdom of Judah in 701 B.C. Once in Nineveh, Jonah is to preach to the Ninevites and convince them to repent and be “saved.” But that is the last thing Jonah wants, for Jonah *hates* the Ninevites, and he wants them all dead! So, instead of traveling 800 miles east by land to Nineveh (near modern-day Mosul, Iraq), Jonah sets sail 1,900 miles *west* from Joppa to Tarshish (perhaps ancient Carthage)—the *exact opposite direction*, as far away from Nineveh as he can get!

Well, we all know what happens along the way . . .

Lesson #6: Nahum (1: 1 – 3: 19)



**“Nahum and the Destruction of Nineveh,” initial letter from
Bible of the Monastery of Santa Maria de Alcobaça
(Illuminated manuscript, ALC 455. fl.300), c. 1220-1230.
National Library of Portugal, Lisbon.**

At its peak, the Neo-Assyrian Empire (911-609 B.C.) was the largest and most powerful empire on the face of the earth, extending from the Caucasus Mountains in the north, to Egypt, Arabia and Nubia in the south, to central Persia in the east, and the Mediterranean coastal plain in the west . . . over half a million square miles. Assyria was the world’s first great empire, an empire built by ruthless conquest. The Assyrian war machine was the most efficient and brutal military force in the ancient world, with a professional standing army, iron weapons, exceptional engineering skills, and absolutely brutal tactics, which Israel experienced when its capital of Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 722 B.C. and Judah nearly experienced the same when the Assyrians attacked Jerusalem in 701 B.C.

It’s no wonder then, that Nahum utters a vicious prophecy against Assyria’s hated capital city of Nineveh shortly before Nineveh falls to a coalition of Babylonians and Medes in 612 B.C. In Nahum’s mind, the fall of Nineveh is divine justice: what goes around, comes around, and it sets the stage for the Babylonian period in Scripture.

Week 4 (June 22/23)

Lesson #7: Zephaniah (1: 1 – 3: 20)



**“Zephaniah Addresses the People,” *Latin Bible* (MS 0007, fol. 183), 16th century.
Bibliothèque Municipale, Valenciennes, France.**

Like the earlier prophets, Zephaniah gives us the historical context for his prophecy: “The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah, the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah (640-609 B.C.),” (1: 1). We remember Josiah for the religious reforms that he and Jeremiah had launched in the latter years of Josiah’s reign, but in the early years the Assyrians still exerted considerable influence in the affairs of Judah and Jerusalem. Zephaniah speaks into this earlier context, somewhat overlapping with the prophet Jeremiah.

Zephaniah foresees doom and destruction for Judah and Jerusalem as “the day of the Lord” comes swiftly upon them, a time of divine judgment for their religious apostasy and corruption.

Lesson #8: Habakkuk (1: 1 – 3: 19)



**“Habakkuk Has a Question for God,” initial letter from
Bible of the Monastery of Santa Maria de Alcobaca
(Illuminated manuscript, ALC 455. fl.301), c. 1220-1230.
National Library of Portugal, Lisbon.**

Habakkuk is the prophet with a question mark for a brain: “How long, O Lord, must I cry for help and you do not listen? Or cry out to you, ‘Violence!’ and you do not intervene?” (1: 2). Habakkuk writes between the Babylonian victory over the Egyptians at the Battle of Carchemish (605 B.C.) and the Fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.). His short book (three chapters, fifty-six verses, in total) begins as a dialogue between Habakkuk and God, with Habakkuk asking the questions and God responding. Habakkuk has serious questions about God’s justice, exceeded only by those of Job himself. In the end, though, Habakkuk concludes with a song of praise to God.

Week 5 (June 29/30)

Lesson #9: Joel (1: 1 – 4: 21) and Obadiah (1: 1-21)



**Michelangelo. *Prophet Joel* (fresco), c. 1508-1512.
Sistine Chapel, Vatican City.**

Joel

Joel doesn't give us the historical context for his prophecy, but we can infer that it is the Babylonian invasion of Judah and Jerusalem. Using the metaphor of a locust swarm, Joel crafts a vivid picture of drought and of locusts swarming the land, stripping it bare, leaving not a blade of grass. So, the Babylonian invasion will be.

But, as in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Joel then envisions a future Jerusalem, one with abundant rain, fresh crops and a renewed people. In St. Peter's first sermon on Pentecost A.D. 32, Peter quotes Joel 3: 1-5, identifying the newly-born Christian community in Jerusalem as that people (Acts 2: 16-21).

Obadiah

Obadiah is the shortest book among the minor prophets, a single chapter of twenty-one verses, an oracle against Edom. Like Joel, Obadiah doesn't provide the historical context for his oracle, but he clearly utters it after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., during which time the Edomites supported the Babylonians, descended upon Jerusalem and looted it (see Psalm 137: 7).

Obadiah is a bitter cry for vengeance against Israel's long-time enemy, the Edomites.

Lesson #10: Haggai and the Return from Captivity (1: 1 – 2: 23)



Jacob van Loo. *Zerubbabel Displays a Plan of Jerusalem to Cyrus the Great* (oil on canvas), 1660. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Orleans, France.

Haggai's prophecy addresses the conditions in what is now the province of Judah during the reign of the Persian king, Darius I (522-486 B.C.). Although Zerubbabel led the people back to Judah after Cyrus the Great's decree of 539 B.C., the kingdom of Judah is finished, the Davidic monarchy has ended and the temple is gone. So, who are the Jews and what is their future?

As you'll recall, Zerubbabel and the returned exiles began rebuilding the temple in 538 B.C., but work quickly stopped when confronted by local opposition. Only in 520 B.C. did work resume. That's when Haggai writes his short prophecy, between August and December of 520 B.C.

Zerubbabel was a direct descendant of king David, but under the Persians (and later the Greeks and the Romans) an independent Davidic monarchy would never be restored, so Haggai envisions a Davidic dynasty in the eschatological future, a vision of hope.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

No Classes on Monday & Tuesday, July 6/7.



**Fireworks over the Washington Memorial
Washington, D.C.**

Week 6 (July 13/14)

Lesson #11: Zechariah, Part 1—Visions and Oracles (1: 1 – 8: 23)



The Vision of Zechariah
(Tempera colors and gold on parchment, Ms. 35 leaf 2, (88. MS. 125.r), c. 1300.
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Zechariah writes at the same time as Haggai, during work on the second temple, 520-516 B.C. The book of Zechariah consists of two major parts: 1) chapters 1-8; and 2) chapters 9-14. Part one consists of three literary units: 1) an introductory unit that links Zechariah's prophecies to those of Haggai (1: 1-6); 2) seven "visions" (1: 7 – 6: 15); and 3) an address to a delegation from Bethel (7: 1-14), followed by seven oracles concerning the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem (8: 1-23).

Lesson #12: Zechariah, Part 2—An Eschatological Future (9: 1 – 14: 21)



Pietro Lorenzetti. *Jesus Enters Jerusalem and the Crowds Welcome Him* (fresco, Lower Basilica, San Francesco, southern transept), c. 1320. Assisi, Italy.

Part two of Zechariah appears to be written nearly a century later and it consists of an extraordinarily diverse set of oracles in a variety of literary genres that focus on the dire consequences of disobeying God and on a glorious eschatological future, a time in which all people will recognize Jerusalem's central role in God's plan for humanity and acknowledge God's absolute sovereignty.

Week 7 (July 20/21)

Lesson #13: Malachi (1: 1 – 3: 23)



Franciszek Zmurko. *The Coming of God's Messenger in 3: 1* (engraving), 1867.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gustave_Doré_Malachiás_3.1.jpg.

Malachi addresses an audience a few generations after the restoration of the temple, c. 420 B.C. With Jerusalem restored and the temple rebuilt, one would think that a grateful people would thank God and be back on track. But, no! Instead, in Malachi God levels eight accusations against his people: 1) they don't show proper love toward God (1: 2-5); 2) the people dishonor God (1: 6a); 3) the priests hold God in contempt (1: 6b-9); 4) men divorce their wives and take up with other women (2: 13-16); 5) the people blur the difference between right and wrong (2: 17); 6) the people turn their backs on God (3: 6-7a); 7) both people and priests steal from God (3: 7b-12); and 8) the people and priests mock God (3: 13-15).

Malachi's tone is weary, and he promises a reckoning to come.

Lesson #14: Filling the Gap: Between the Old and New Testaments



Andrea Verrocchio [workshop]. *Tobias and the Angel* (egg tempera on poplar wood), c. 1470-1475. National Gallery, London.

Malachi is the last book in the “common” canon, exposing a nearly 500-year gap before arriving at the Gospels. Did God suddenly fall silent for half a millennium? Indeed, not. A rich collection of literary works fills the gap, a collection called the “Deuterocanonical Books” or the “Apocrypha.”

In this lesson, we’ll explore what goes on between the Old and New Testaments, and we’ll discover some delightful and informative works!

Bibliography

General

- Becking, Bob and Marjo C. A. Korpel, eds. [*The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times*](#). Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999.
- Ben Zvi, Ehud. [*Two Sides of a Coin: Juxtaposing Views on Interpreting the Book of the Twelve/ The Twelve Prophetic Books*](#). Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2009.
- Boda, Mark J. [*The Book of the Twelve and the New Form Criticism*](#) (Ancient Near East Monographs). Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.
- Dempsey, Carol J. [*The Prophets: A Liberation-Critical Reading*](#) (A Liberation-Critical Reading of the Old Testament). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.
- Emadi, Samuel. Intertextuality in New Testament Scholarship: Significance, Criteria, and the Art of Intertextual Reading,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 14 (2015), pp. 8-23.
- Floyd, Michael H. [*Minor Prophets: Part 2*](#) (Forms of the Old Testament Literature). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000.
- Fretheim, Terence E. [*Reading Hosea – Micah: A Literary and Theological Commentary*](#). Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2017. ★★★★★
- House, Paul R. and James W. Watts, eds. [*Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts*](#) (The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies). Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
- Jones, Barry A. “The Seventh-Century Prophets in Twenty-First Century Research,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 14.2 (2016), pp. 129-175.
- Leclerc, Thomas L. [*Introduction to the Prophets: Their Stories, Sayings and Scrolls*](#), 2nd ed. New York: Paulist Press, 2017. ★★★★★
- Lipschits, Oded. [*The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule*](#). Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005.
- Matthews, Victor. [*The Hebrew Prophets and Their Social World: An Introduction*](#), 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.

- Nogalski, James D. *[The Book of the Twelve: Hosea – Jonah](#)*. Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2011.
- _____. *[The Book of the Twelve: Micah – Malachi](#)*. Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2011.
★★★★★
- Nogalski, James D. and Marvin Sweeney, eds. *[Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve](#)* (Classroom Resource Materials, Book 15). Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000. ★★★★★
- Reddit, Paul L. and Aaron Schart, eds. *[Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve](#)* (Beiheft Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003.
- Schoors, Antoon. The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E., trans. By M. Lesley. *[Biblishe Enzyklopädie](#)*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.
- Smith, Ralph L. *[Micah-Malachi](#)* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 32). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984. ★★★★★
- Stuart, Douglas. *[Hosea-Jonah](#)* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 31). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988. ★★★★★
- Sweeney, Marvin A. *[The Twelve Prophets, vol. 1](#)* (Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry). Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000.
- _____. *[The Twelve Prophets, vol. 2](#)* (Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry). Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000.
- Troxel, Ronald L. *[Prophetic Literature, from Oracles to Books](#)*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Hosea

- Ben Zvi, Ehud. *[Hosea](#)* (The Forms of Old Testament Literature, 21). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005.
- Chaney, M. L. “Accusing Whom of What? Hosea’s Rhetoric of Promiscuity,” in Holly E. Heaton, ed., *[Distant Voices Drawing Near: Essays in Honor of Antoinette Clark Wire](#)* (pp. 97-115). Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004.
- Keefe, Alice A. *[Woman’s Body and the Social Body in Hosea 1-2](#)*. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2002.

Kelle, Brad E. "Hosea 1-3 in Twentieth-century Scholarship," *Currents in Research* 7 (2009), pp. 179-216.

_____. "Hosea 4-14 in Twentieth-century Scholarship," *Currents in Research* 8 (2010), pp. 314-375.

Macintosh, A. A. *Hosea: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (International Critical Commentaries). London: T&T Clark, 2014.

Matthews, Victor M., et al., eds. *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 262), Supplement Series 262). Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998.

McComiskey, Thomas Edward, ed. *The Minor Prophets: A Commentary on Hosea, Joel, Amos*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1992.

Stuart, Douglas. *Hosea-Jonah* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 31). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988. ★★★★★

Joel

Allen, Leslie, C. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*, 2nd edition (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976.

Barton, John. *Joel and Obadiah: A Commentary* (The Old Testament Library). Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Brodsky, Harold. "'An Enormous Hoard Arrayed for Battle'," *Bible Review* 6. 4 (1990), pp. 32-39.

Coggins, R. "Joel," *Currents in Biblical Research* 2 (2003), pp. 85-103.

_____. "Interbiblical Quotations in Joel," in John Barton and David J. Reimer, eds. *After the Exile: Essays in Honor of Rex Mason* (pp. 75-84). Mercer: Mercer University Press, 1997.

McComiskey, Thomas Edward, ed. *The Minor Prophets: A Commentary on Hosea, Joel, Amos*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1992.

Stuart, Douglas. *Hosea-Jonah* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 31). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988. ★★★★★

Troxel, Ronald. "The Fate of Joel in the Redaction of the Twelve," *Currents in Biblical Research* 13 (2015), pp. 152-174.

Amos

- Anderson, Francis I. and David Noel Freedman. [*Amos*](#) (Anchor Bible Series). New York: Doubleday, 1989.
- Carroll, M. Daniel. "Twenty Years of Amos Research," *Currents in Biblical Research* 18 (2019), pp. 32-58.
- Jeremias, Jörg. [*The Book of Amos: A Commentary*](#) (The Old Testament Library). Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.
- McComiskey, Thomas Edward, ed. [*The Minor Prophets: A Commentary on Hosea, Joel, Amos*](#). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1992.
- Melugin, R. F. "The Formation of Amos: An Analysis of Exegetical Method," *Society of Biblical Literature Special Publications (SBLSP)* 13 (1978), pp. 369-396.
- Paul, Shalom M. [*Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos*](#) (Hermeneia: a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.
- Stuart, Douglas. [*Hosea-Jonah*](#) (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 31). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988. ★★★★★

Obadiah

- Allen, Leslie, C. [*The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*](#), 2nd edition (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976.
- Barton, John. [*Joel and Obadiah: A Commentary*](#) (The Old Testament Library). Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.
- Ben Zvi, Ehud. [*A Historical-Critical Study of the Book of Obadiah*](#) (Beiheft Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996.
- Raabe, Paul R. [*Obadiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*](#), rev. ed. (Anchor Yale Bible Series). New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007. ★★★★★
- Stuart, Douglas. [*Hosea-Jonah*](#) (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 31). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988.
- Wolff, Hans Walter. [*Obadiah and Jonah: A Commentary*](#) (Continental Commentaries). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.

Jonah

- Allen, Leslie, C. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*, 2nd edition (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976.
- Ben Zvi, Ehud. "Jonah 4: 11 and the Metaphoric Character of the Book of Jonah," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9 (2009), pp. 1-13 [Retrieved from: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_107.pdf].
- Bolin, T. M. "'Should I Not Also Pity Nineveh?': Divine Freedom in the Book of Jonah," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 67 (1995), pp. 109-120.
- Cooper, A. "In Praise of Divine Caprice: The Significance of the Book of Jonah," in Philip R. Davies and David J. A. Clines, eds., *Among the Prophets: Language, Image and Structure in the Prophetic Writings* (Journal of Old Testament Studies, Supplement Series, Book 144), (pp. 144-163). Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.
- Craig, Kenneth M. *A Poetics of Jonah: Art in the Service of Ideology* (Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament). Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993.
- Goldstein, E. "On the Use of the Name of God in the Book of Jonah," in Sarah Malena and David Miano, eds. *Milk and Honey: Essays on Ancient Israel and the Bible in Appreciation of the Judaic Studies Program at the University of California, San Diego*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007, (pp. 77-83).
- Guillaume, Philip. "The End of Jonah Is the Beginning of Wisdom," *Biblical Studies on the Web* 87 (2006), pp. 243-250.
- Stuart, Douglas. *Hosea-Jonah* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 31). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988.
- Wolff, Hans Walter. *Obadiah and Jonah: A Commentary* (Continental Commentaries). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991. ★★★★★

Micah

- Allen, Leslie, C. *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*, 2nd edition (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976.
- Anderson, Francis I. and David Noel Freedman. *Micah* (Anchor Bible Series). New York: Doubleday, 2000.

Ben Zvi, Ehud. *Micah* (The Forms of the Old Testament Literature, vol. 21B). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000. ★★★★★

Nastui, Harry P. "The Once and Future Lament: Micah 2: 1-5 and the Prophetic Persona," in John Kaltner and Louis Stulman, eds., *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East in Honor of Herbert B. Huffman* (T&T Clark Biblical Studies). London: T&T Clark, 2004, pp. 144-160.

Smith, Ralph L. *Micah-Malachi* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 32). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

Wolff, Hans Walter. *Micah: A Commentary* (Augsburg Continental Commentary Series). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.

Nahum

Becking, Bob. "Passion, Power, Protection: Interpreting the God of Nahum," in Bob Becking and Meindert Dijkstra, eds., *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender-Specific and Related Studies in Memory of Fokkelien Van Dijk-Hermmes* (Biblical Interpretation Series, 18). Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996.

Floyd, M. H. "The Chimerical Acrostic of Nahum 1: 2-10," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113 (1994), pp. 421-427.

Renz, Thomas. "A Perfectly Broken Acrostic in Nahum 1?" *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9 (2009), pp. 1-26 [Retrieved from: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_125.pdf].

Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990.

Smith, Ralph L. *Micah-Malachi* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 32). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984. ★★★★★

Spronk, Klaas. "Acrostics in the Book of Nahum," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 110 (1998), pp. 209-222.

Weigl, Michael. "Current Research on the Book of Nahum: Exegetical Methodologies in Turmoil?" *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 9 (2001), pp. 81-130.

Habakkuk

- Ahituv, Shmuel. "The Sinai Theophany in the Psalm of Habakkuk," in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (pp. 225-232), edited by Chaim Cohen, et al. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008,
- Andersen, Francis I. *Habakkuk* (The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, 25). New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001. ★★★★★
- Dangl, Oskar. "Habakkuk in Recent Research," *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 9 (2001), pp. 131-168.
- Peckham, B. "The Vision of Habakkuk," *Catholic biblical Quarterly* 48 (1986), pp. 617-636.
- Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990.
- Smith, Ralph L. *Micah-Malachi* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 32). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984. ★★★★★
- Sweeney, M. A. "Structure, Genre and Intent in the Book of Habakkuk," *Vetus Testamentum* 41 (1991), pp. 63-83.
- Thompson, M. E. W. "Prayer, Oracle and Theophany: The Book of Habakkuk," *Tyndale Bulletin* 44 (1993), pp. 33-53.

Zephaniah

- Ben Zvi, Ehud. "Josiah and the Prophetic Books: Some Observations," in Lester L. Grabbe, ed., *Good Kings and Bad Kings: The Kingdom of Judah in the Seventh Century B.C.E.* (The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament), (pp. 47-64). London: T&T Clark, 2007.
- House, P. R. "Dialogue in Zephaniah," in Robert P. Gordon, ed., *This Place is Too Small for Us: The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship* (Sources for Biblical and Theological Study), (pp. 252-262). Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995.
- Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990.

Smith, Ralph L. *Micah-Malachi* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 32). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

Sweeney, Marvin A. *Zephaniah: A Commentary* (Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003. ★★★★★

Haggai

Assis, Elie. "Haggai: Structure and Meaning," *Biblica* 87 (2006), pp. 531-541.

_____. "The Temple in the Book of Haggai," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 8 (2008), pp. 1-10. [Retrieved from: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_96.pdf].

Boda, Mark J. "Majoring on the Minors: Recent Research on Haggai and Zechariah," *Currents in Biblical Research* 2 (2003b), pp. 33-68.

_____. and Michael Floyd, eds. *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology* (The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies). London: T&T Clark, 2008.

Jacobs, Mignon R. *The Books of Haggai and Malachi* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2017.

Kessler, J. "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text and History in Haggai 1: 1-15," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 2 (2002), pp. 243-256.

Meyers, Carol L. and Eric M. Meyers. *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8* (Anchor Bible Series, vol. 25B). New York: Doubleday, 1987.

Peterson, David L. *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8: A Commentary* (The Old Testament Library). Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015. ★★★★★

Smith, Ralph L. *Micah-Malachi* (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 32). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

Tuell, S. S. "Haggai-Zechariah: Prophecy after the Manner of Ezekiel," *Society of Biblical Literature Special Publications (SBLSP)* 39 (2000), pp. 263-286.

Verhoef, Pieter A. *The Books of Haggai and Malachi* (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987.

Wöhrle, Jakob. "The Formation and Intention of the Haggai-Zechariah Corpus," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 6 (2006b), pp. 1-14 [Retrieved from: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_60.pdf].

Wolff, Hans Walter. *Haggai: A Commentary* (Continental Commentary Series). Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988.

Zechariah

Boda, Mark J. "From Fasts to Feasts: The Literary Function of Zechariah 7-8," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65 (2003), pp. 390-407.

_____. "Hoy, Hoy: The Prophetic Origins of the Babylonian Tradition in Zechariah 2: 10-17," in Mark J. Boda and Michael Floyd, eds. *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology* (The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies). London: T&T Clark, 2008.

_____. "Majoring on the Minors: Recent Research on Haggai and Zechariah," *Currents in Biblical Research* 2 (2003b), pp. 33-68.

_____. "Oil, Crowns and Thrones: Prophet, Priest and King in Zechariah 1: 7 – 6: 15," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 3 (2001), pp. 1-35 [Retrieved from: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_22.pdf].

_____. "Terrifying the Horns: Persia and Babylon in Zechariah 1: 7 – 6: 15," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 67 (2005), pp. 22-41.

_____. "Zechariah: Master Mason or Penitential Prophet?" in Rainer Alberz and Bob Becking, eds. *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (Studies in Theology and Religion), (pp. 49-69). Leiden: Brill, 2003.

_____. and Michael Floyd, eds. *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology* (The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies). London: T&T Clark, 2008.

Floyd, Michael H. "Deutero-Zechariah and Types of Intertextuality," in Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd, eds., *Bringing Out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9-14*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003, pp. 225-244.



Meyers, Carol L. and Eric M. Meyers. *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8* (Anchor Bible Series, vol. 25B). New York: Doubleday, 1987.

_____. *Zechariah 9-14* (Anchor Bible Series, 9), New York: Doubleday, 1993.

Peterson, David L. [*Haggai and Zechariah 1-8: A Commentary*](#) (The Old Testament Library). Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015. ★★★★★

_____. [*Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi: A Commentary*](#) (The Old Testament Library). Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.

Redditt, Paul L. [*Zechariah 9-14*](#) (International Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament). Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 2012. ★★★★★

Smith, Ralph L. [*Micah-Malachi*](#) (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 32). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

Tuell, S. S. "Haggai-Zechariah: Prophecy after the Manner of Ezekiel," *Society of Biblical Literature Special Publications (SBLSP)* 39 (2000), pp. 263-286.

Wöhrle, Jakob. "The Formation and Intention of the Haggai-Zechariah Corpus," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 6 (2006b), pp. 1-14 [Retrieved from: http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_60.pdf].

Malachi

Fisher, J. A. "Notes on the Literary Form and Message of Malachi," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 34 (1972), pp. 315-320.

Jacobs, Mignon R. [*The Books of Haggai and Malachi*](#) (New International Commentary on the Old Testament). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2017. ★★★★★

Smith, Ralph L. [*Micah-Malachi*](#) (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 32). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

Verhoef, Pieter A. [*The Books of Haggai and Malachi*](#) (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament). Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987.