

## Bible Overview

### Minor prophets

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

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#### Hosea

**Author:** Hosea

**Time:** 755 – 710 B.C.

**Summary:** The book of Hosea describes the patient long-suffering of God towards the rebellious and unfaithful northern kingdom of Israel. However, it is made clear to the Israelites that punishment will engulf anyone who remains wilfully rebellious. God ordered Hosea to marry an adulterous wife, Gomer. This was a symbolic representation of God's relation to Israel.

**Key verses:**

"The Lord said to [Hosea], 'Go, take yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the Lord' " (1:2)

**Main people:** Hosea; the kings of Israel from Jeroboam II to Hoshea.

1. The unfaithful wife and the faithful husband 1:1 – 3:5

- a) Hosea's wife and children 1:1 – 2:1
- b) Judgment on faithless Israel 2:2–13
- c) The restoration of faithless Israel 2:14–23
- d) Hosea's redemption of his faithless wife 3:1–5

2. The unfaithful nation and the faithful God 4:1 – 13:16

- a) Israel's unfaithfulness 4:1 – 6:3
- b) Israel's punishment 6:4 – 10:15
- c) The Lord's faithful love 11:1 – 14:9

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## Joel

**Author:** Joel

**Time:** Unknown. The two most likely dates are about 830 B.C. or about 500 B.C. In either case, its message is not significantly affected by its dating.

**Summary:** The book of Joel begins by describing a devastating swarm of locusts which causes national disaster to the agriculture of Israel. Joel calls the nation of Judah to a day of repentance due to the divine judgment. The last portion of the book is concerned with events associated with the "Day of the Lord". The message is that, if Judah repents, God will richly bless them and forgive them.

**Key verses:**

"I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophecy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions . . . And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (2:28,32).

**Main people:** Joel; possibly during the reign of King Joash or after the exile.

1. The locust plague as a foretaste of the Day of the Lord 1:1 – 2:17

a) The calamity 1:1–20

b) The scourge as the forerunner of the judgment day 2:1–17

2. The averting of judgment and bestowal of blessings 2:18 – 3:21

a) The Lord's restoration of Judah 2:18–27

b) The outpouring of the Holy Spirit 2:28–32

c) Judgment upon the nations 3:1–16

d) The blessings on God's people 3:17–21

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## Amos

**Author:** Amos, a herdsman from Tekoa (a small town 17 km from Jerusalem)

**Time:** 765 – 750 B.C.

**Summary:** The book of Amos was written during a period of national optimism in Israel. King Jeroboam II was ruler, and it was a time of great prosperity in which the kingdom had reached new political and military heights. It was also a time of idolatry, extravagant indulgence in luxury, immorality, corruption and oppression of the poor. Amos was called by God to pronounce judgment on the northern kingdom of Israel by denouncing Israel's luxurious living, idolatry and moral depravity. Amos urges the people to repent before the judgements of God came upon them. "Seek God and live" was Amos' plea to the nation. He also foretells of the dispersion of the Israelites, but points to a day when God would regather them in the land of their forefathers.

### Key verses:

"I hate, I despise your religious feasts: I cannot stand your assemblies . . . let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (5:21,24)

**Main People:** Amos was a contemporary of Hosea, and, late in his ministry, of Isaiah and Micah, King Uzziah ruled in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel.

1. Judgments against the nations 1:1–2:16
  - a) Introduction 1:1–2
  - b) Judgement of neighbouring nations 1:3 – 2:3
  - c) Judgement of Judah and Israel 2:4–16
2. Three oracles of judgement against Israel 3:1 – 5:17
  - a) A declaration of judgment 3:1–15
  - b) The depravity of Israel 4:1–13
  - c) A lamentation for Israel's sin and doom 5:1–17
3. Two oracles of woe against Israel 5:18 – 6:14
  - a) Woe against Israel's perverted religion 5:18–27
  - b) Woe against Israel's complacent pride 6:1–14

4. Five visions of judgement against Israel 7:1 – 9:10

- a) The devouring locusts 7:1–3
- b) The flaming fire 7:4–6
- c) The plumb line 7:7–17
- d) The basket of ripe fruit 8:1–14
- e) The judgment of the Lord 9:1–10

5. The promise of Israel's restoration 9:11–15

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## Obadiah

**Author:** Obadiah

**Time:** 585– 565 B.C.

**Summary:** Obadiah was a prophet who pronounced judgment upon the nation of Edom for its antagonism against Israel. Edom is the nation that is descended from Esau, the twin brother of Jacob (Israel). Edom was to be punished for the violence against Israel they committed when invading the land.

### Key verse:

"The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights, you who say to yourself, 'Who can bring me down to the ground?' " (1:3)

1. Judgement on Edom 2–14

- a) Edom's destruction announced 2–7
- b) Edom's destruction reaffirmed 8–14

2. The Day of the Lord 15–21

- a) Judgement on the nations but deliverance for Zion 15–18
  - b) The Lord's kingdom established 19–21
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# Jonah

**Author:** Jonah

**Time:** 775 – 760 B.C.

**Summary:** The book is concerned with the commission of Jonah to warn the city of Nineveh (capital of Assyria) to repent and obey God's commandments to avoid assured destruction. Jonah is reluctant to preach this message and is therefore swallowed by a great fish and remains in the belly of the fish for three days. Upon his release, he preaches the message to the people of Nineveh who believe his message and repent of their sins.

**Key verse:**

"Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?" (4:11)

**Main people:** Jonah, sailors, people of Nineveh

1. Jonah flees his mission 1:1–17

- a) Jonah's commission and flight 1:1–3
- b) A storm at sea 1:4–14
- c) Cast overboard 1:15 – 2:1
- d) Jonah's prayer of thanksgiving 2:2–10

2. Jonah reluctantly fulfils his mission 3:1– 4:11

- a) Jonah's renewed commission and obedience 3:1–4
  - b) The Ninevites' repentant appeal to the Lord 3:5–9
  - c) The Ninevites repentance acknowledged 3:10 – 4:4
  - d) Jonah's complaint and rebuke 4:5–11
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## Micah

**Author:** Micah

**Time:** 735 – 700 B.C.

**Summary:** Micah was contemporary with Isaiah and was to the southern kingdom of Judah what Amos was previously to the northern kingdom of Israel. Both were fierce critics of the rich and powerful who exploited the poor. Micah's leading ideas are the regeneration of Israel's remnant through judgment, the establishment of the kingdom of God in the line of David, and the conversion of the nations through that kingdom. The conclusion of his prophecy is a triumphant expression of faith, seen in its true quality against the background of the materialism and the corruption of the reign of Ahaz.

### Key verses:

"In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it" (4:1)

#### 1. Judgment against Israel and Judah 1:2–16

- a) Introduction 1:1–2
- b) Predicted destruction 1:3–7
- c) Lamentation for the destruction 1:8–16
- d) Corruption in Micah's society 2:1–11
- e) Hope in the midst of gloom 2:12–13
- f) The leaders condemned 3:1–12

#### 2. Hope for Israel and Judah 4:1–5:15

- a) The coming Kingdom 4:1 – 5:1
- b) The coming king 5:2–15

#### 3. The Lord's case against Israel 6:1–16

- a) The Lord's accusation 6:1–8
- b) The coming judgement 6:9–16

#### 4. Gloom turns to triumph 7:1–20

- a) Micah laments the corruption of his society 7:1–7
  - b) A bright future for God's people 7:8–20
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## Nahum

**Author:** Nahum

**Time:** 620 B.C.

**Summary:** The book of Nahum was written approximately 140 years after the recorded events in the book of Jonah. During that period of time, Nineveh had turned from its repentant attitude and had taken the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity. Whereas Jonah proclaimed a message of mercy and repentance, Nahum proclaimed an indictment of doom upon Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. They who were once used as God's tool against the people of Israel and Jerusalem, would now be destroyed because of their great wickedness.

### Key verses:

"The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him, but with an overwhelming flood he will make an end of Nineveh; he will pursue his foes into darkness" (1:7,8).

#### 1. Nineveh's doom declared 1:1–15

- a) Character of Nineveh's judge 1:1–8
- b) Declaration of Nineveh's doom 1:9–11
- c) Comfort to Nineveh's oppressed 1:12–15

#### 2. Nineveh's doom described 2:1–13

- a) City besieged 2:1–5
- b) City overwhelmed 2:6–10
- c) City made desolate 2:11–13

#### 3. Nineveh's doom deserved 3:1–19

- a) Cause of the overthrow 3:1–4
  - b) Lesson of the overthrow 3:5–13
  - c) Certainty of the overthrow 3:14–19
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## Habakkuk

**Author:** Habakkuk

**Time:** 620 – 605 B.C.

**Summary:** The book begins with Habakkuk complaining of injustice in Judah and his inability to understand God's failure to judge the wicked and morally depraved nation of Babylon. Habakkuk is shown that God's people must continue to trust in his mercy regardless of the circumstances about them. The wicked appear to prosper while the righteous are chastened. However this prosperity of the wicked is only temporary. God will not abandon those who obey and follow his commandments: "the just shall live by faith".

**Key verse:**

"Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy" (3:2)

1. Habakkuk's first complaint: Why does evil in Judah go unpunished? 1:1–4
  2. God's answer: The Babylonians will punish Judah 1:5–11
  3. Habakkuk's second complaint: How can a just God use wicked Babylon to punish people more righteous than themselves? 1:12 – 2:1
  4. God's answer: Babylon will be punished, faith will be rewarded 2:2–20
  5. Habakkuk's prayer 3:1–19
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## Zephaniah

**Author:** Zephaniah

**Time:** 635 – 615 B.C.

**Summary:** Zephaniah prophesied during King Josiah's reign. He was responsible for a great religious reform. This reform followed the wicked reigns of Manasseh and Amon, who led the nation into various forms of idolatry. Zephaniah pronounces inescapable judgments against Jerusalem for their sins and exhorts national repentance. He further speaks of the "day of the Lord" when God will intervene to judge sin.

**Key verse:**

"Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger" (2:3)

1. Announcement of total judgement 1:1–3
  2. The day of the Lord coming on Judah and the nations 1:4–18
    - a) Judgment on idolaters in Judah 1:4–9
    - b) Wailing through Jerusalem 1:10–13
    - c) The inescapable day of the Lord's wrath 1:14–18
  3. God's judgement on the nations 2:1–3:8
    - a) Call to repentance 2:1–3
    - b) Judgement on Philistia 2:4–7
    - c) Judgement on Moab and Ammon 2:8–11
    - d) Judgement on Cush 2:12
    - e) Judgement on Assyria 2:13–15
    - f) Judgement on Jerusalem 3:1–5
    - g) Jerusalem's refusal to repent 3:6–8
  4. Redemption of the remnant 3:9–20
    - a) The nations purified, the remnant restored, Jerusalem purged 3:9–13
    - b) Rejoicing in the city 3:14–17
    - c) The nation restored 3:18–20
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## Haggai

**Author:** Haggai

**Time:** 520 B.C.

**Summary:** Haggai's four messages were given during a four-month period in 520 B.C.. He was contemporary with Zechariah. Both Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the Jews who had returned to Judah from their captivity in Babylon to rebuild the Temple (Ezra 5:1–2; 6:14). Haggai exhorts them to "consider their ways" and to complete the Temple whose foundation had been laid 18 years before. (The people responded and the Temple was completed in 516 B.C.) Haggai further pronounces that pagan empires will be overthrown by God and Judah will be elevated during the time of the Messiah.

### Key verse:

"Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little . . . You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it . . . build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured" (1:5,6,8).

1. First message: the call to rebuild the temple 1:1–11
  2. The response of Zerubbabel and the people 1:12–15
  3. Second message: The temple to be filled with glory 2:1–9
  4. Third message: a defiled people purified and blessed 2:10–19
  5. Fourth message: the promise to Zerubbabel 2:20–23
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## Zechariah

**Author:** Zechariah

**Time:** 520 – 490 B.C.

**Summary:** Zechariah was a younger contemporary of Haggai. He also encouraged the people to rebuild the Temple. Like Daniel and Revelation, this book contains Apocalyptic visions. It contains detailed references to the coming Messiah. The book concludes with descriptions of the enemies of Jerusalem being judged and of the future glory of God's kingdom.

**Key verse:**

"Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (9:9).

1. Introduction: The call to repent 1:1–6

2. The night visions of Zechariah 1:7–6:8

a) Vision of the horses 1:7–17

b) Vision of the horns and craftsmen 1:18–21

c) Vision of the surveyor 2:1–13

d) Vision of Joshua the high priest 3:1–10

e) Vision of the golden lampstand and two olive trees 4:1–14

f) Vision of the flying scroll 5:1–4

g) Vision of the woman in a basket 5:5–11

h) Vision of the four chariots 6:1–8

3. The crowning of Joshua 6:9–15

4. Questions concerning fasting 7:1–8:23

a) The question 7:1–3

b) The lesson from history 7:4–14

c) God's purpose of blessing for Israel 8:1–23

5. The future of the nations, Israel and Messiah's kingdom 9:1 – 14:21

a) The first oracle 9:1–11:17

b) The second oracle 12:1–14:21

## Malachi

**Author:** Malachi

**Time:** 430 B.C.

**Summary:** Malachi's message comes to the people in a time of great spiritual decline. It is approximately 80 years after the rebuilding of the temple and the promises of the coming Messiah have not yet been realised. As a result, the people had become lax and had an increasingly casual attitude toward God and worship. Malachi states that their sacrifices were unacceptable to God, husbands were unfaithful, and the priests had neglected God's covenants.

### Key verse:

" 'See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,' says the Lord Almighty" (3:1).

1. God's love for Israel affirmed 1:1–5

2. Israel's unfaithfulness rebuked 1:6 – 2:16

a) The unfaithful priests 1:6 – 2:9

b) The unfaithful people 2:10–16

3. The Lord's coming announced 2:17 – 4:6

a) The Lord will purify the priests and judge the people 2:17–3:5

b) A call to repentance 3:6–18

c) The day of the Lord announced 4:1–6