Minor Prophets

Small in Size, Mighty in Message
A 12-Week Journey Through the Minor Prophets

Introduction

Small in Size, Mighty in Message is a 12-week Bible study journey through the twelve Minor Prophets—Hosea through Malachi. Although these prophetic books are called “minor” because of their shorter length, their messages are anything but minor. Together, they reveal God's holiness, justice, mercy, faithfulness, and unwavering desire to restore His people.

Throughout the series, participants will explore the historical setting and central message of each prophet while discovering how these ancient words continue to speak powerfully to believers today. The study will examine recurring themes such as spiritual unfaithfulness, idolatry, injustice, pride, repentance, judgment, restoration, faithful living, and hope.

Each week will introduce the prophet, explain the historical context, examine key passages and major themes, identify connections to Christ and the New Testament, and provide practical applications for Christian living. Participants will also see how the twelve books fit within the larger biblical story—from Israel's divided kingdom and the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions, through exile and restoration, to Malachi's anticipation of the coming Messiah.

The books may be minor in length, but their message about God and His

Syllabus

- Week 1 (9/9): Hosea — wedding ring or broken/restored heart
- Week 2 (9/16): Joel — locusts
- Week 3 (9/23): Amos — scales of justice
- Week 4 (9/30): Obadiah — mountain/cliff representing Edom and pride
- Week 5 (10/7): Jonah — sea/great fish
- Week 6 (10/14): Micah — scales/justice
- 10/21: **KAHOOT TIME! What did you remember?**
- Week 7 (10/28): Nahum — Nineveh/ancient city
- Week 8 (11/4): Habakkuk — watchtower
- Week 9 (11/11): Zephaniah — trumpet or approaching day
- Week 10 (11/18): Haggai — rebuilding the Temple
- Week 11(11/25): Zechariah — lampstand/visions
- Week 12(12/2): Malachi — messenger or sunrise
- 12/9: **KAHOOT TIME! What did you remember?**

Book Resources

1. The Holy Bible
2. Mark J. Boda — The Message of the Twelve: Hearing the Voice of the Minor Prophets
3. T. Desmond Alexander & David W. Baker, eds. — Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets
4. Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart — How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth
5. Andrew E. Hill & John H. Walton — A Survey of the Old Testament
6. Tremper Longman III — Old Testament Commentary Survey

Why Were They called Minor Prophets?

They are called the Minor Prophets because their books are shorter, not because the prophets themselves—or their messages—were less important.

The Old Testament prophetic books are traditionally grouped into two categories:

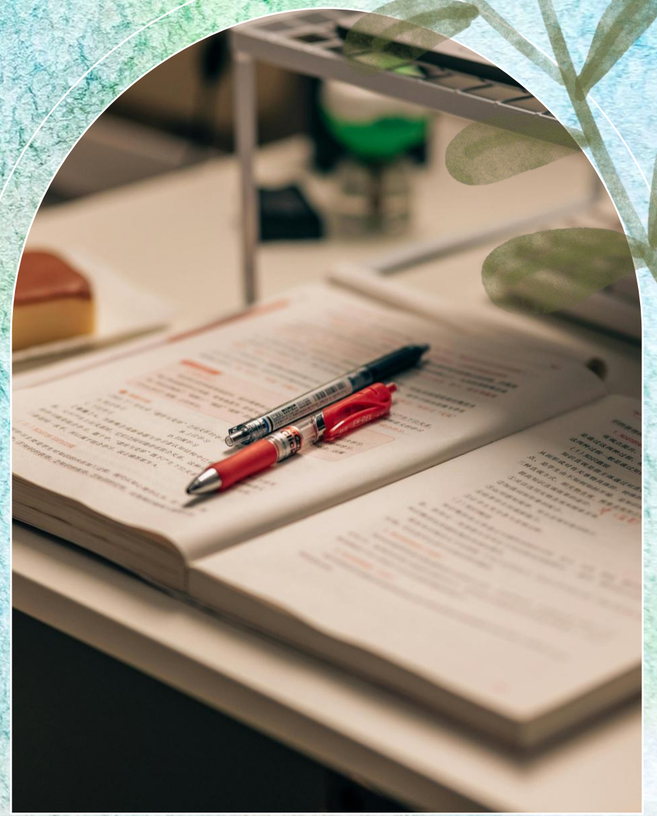
- Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. These books are generally much longer.
- Minor Prophets: Hosea through Malachi—the final 12 books of the Old Testament. These writings are considerably shorter.

The word “minor” refers to length, not significance.

For example, Obadiah has only 21 verses, while Isaiah has 66 chapters. Yet Obadiah's message concerning pride, judgment, justice, and God's sovereignty is still significant.
Why are the 12 grouped together?

In the Hebrew tradition, these twelve prophetic books were collected together as a single collection often called “The Twelve.” Because the individual books were short, placing them together on one scroll also helped preserve them as a collection.

Each prophet may have given us a relatively short book, but each carries a powerful message from God concerning sin, justice, repentance, judgment, mercy, restoration, hope, and the coming Messiah.



Where in History do the Minor Prophets Fit?

Understanding when the prophets spoke helps us understand why they spoke.

The Minor Prophets ministered across several major periods of Israel's history:

1. Divided Kingdom
Israel divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and Southern Kingdom (Judah).

2. Assyrian Crisis
The Northern Kingdom fell to Assyria in 722 BC.

3. Babylonian Crisis & Exile
Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by Babylon in 586 BC.

4. Return & Restoration
Jewish exiles began returning under Persian rule in 538/537 BC.

Divided Kingdom → Assyria → Babylon → Exile → Return → Restoration

Bottom takeaway:
The prophets didn't speak in a vacuum. God sent His messengers into real historical circumstances with a specific word for His people.

Where in History do the Minor Prophets Fit?

Before the Exile: Warning Is Coming

Prophet	Approx. Period	Primary Setting
Jonah	c. 790–750 BC	Sent to Nineveh
Amos	c. 760–750 BC	Northern Kingdom
Hosea	c. 755–715 BC	Northern Kingdom
Micah	c. 735–700 BC	Judah
Nahum	c. 660–630 BC	Judgment against Nineveh
Zephaniah	c. 640–609 BC	Judah
Habakkuk	c. 609–597 BC	Judah/Babylonian threat

The Pre-Exilic Prophets Theme:
“Return to God before judgment comes.”

Major Turning Point
722 BC — Assyria conquers the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
Bottom takeaway:
God repeatedly warned His people before judgment came.

Where in History do the Minor Prophets Fit?

From Judgment to Restoration

722 BC
Israel falls to Assyria
⬇
586 BC
Jerusalem falls to Babylon
Temple destroyed • Judah exiled
⬇
539 BC
Persia conquers Babylon
⬇
538/537 BC
Jewish exiles begin returning to Jerusalem
⬇
520 BC
Haggai & Zechariah minister
⬇
516 BC
Second Temple completed
⬇
c. 450–430 BC
Malachi ministers
Obadiah
Often associated with Jerusalem's destruction, although **its precise date is debated**.

Bottom takeaway:
Judgment was not the end of Israel's story. God preserved His people and brought them home.

Judgment → Exile → Return → Restoration

Where in History do the Minor Prophets Fit?

After the Exile: Rebuild & Prepare

Title:
The Post-Exilic Prophets

Theme:
“You've returned—now return to God with your whole heart.”

Haggai — 520 BC
Message: Put God first and rebuild His house.

Zechariah — 520 BC onward
Message: God has not forgotten His people. Restoration is coming, and God's purposes will be accomplished by His Spirit.

Malachi — c. 450–430 BC
Message: Return to faithful worship and covenant living while awaiting God's coming messenger and Messiah.
Then add a separate box:

What About Joel?

Joel's date is uncertain. Scholars have proposed both pre-exilic and post-exilic dates. Rather than forcing Joel into a specific period, acknowledge the uncertainty while emphasizing his clear message:
Repentance • Day of the LORD • Restoration • Promise of the Spirit

MALACHI → WAITING → MESSIAH → NEW TESTAMENT
The Minor Prophets end with God's people waiting—but God's redemptive story isn't over.

Week 3: Amos

When Worship is Not Enough

Big Idea: ***God uses moments of crisis to call His people back to Himself, offering restoration to those who genuinely return.***

Key Scripture: Amos 5:24

"But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

God is concerned not only with how we worship Him, but with how we live after worship.



Week 3: Amos

Meet the Amos the Prophet

Name: Amos — associated with the idea of **“burden” or “burden-bearer.”**

Time: Approximately **760–750 BC**

Home: Tekoa, a small town in Judah south of Jerusalem.

Occupation: Shepherd/herdsman and worker with sycamore figs.
See Amos 1:1; 7:14–15.



But God Sent Him North
Amos was from **Judah**, the Southern Kingdom.
But God sent him to prophesy primarily to **Israel**, the Northern Kingdom.
What makes Amos interesting?
Amos wasn't part of the established prophetic establishment.
He essentially says:
“I wasn't a prophet by profession. God called me.”

Key Truth
God doesn't always call the person people expect.

Week 3: Amos

Israel Looked Successful

Prosperous on the Outside
Amos ministered during the reign of **Jeroboam II**, when the Northern Kingdom enjoyed significant prosperity and territorial expansion.

Israel appeared successful:
- **Economic prosperity**
- **Beautiful homes**
- **Religious activity**
- **Political stability**
- **Growing wealth**

But underneath the prosperity was another reality:
- **Injustice**
- **Exploitation of the poor**
- **Corruption**
- **Materialism**
- **Idolatry**
- **Spiritual complacency**

Key Truth
A society can look prosperous while being spiritually unhealthy.

Week 3: Amos

Amos Starts With Everybody Else
“For Three Transgressions…and for Four”

Amos 1:3 – 2:5
Living Bible

3 The Lord says, “The people of Damascus have sinned again and again, and I will not forget it. I will not leave her unpunished anymore. For they have
threshed my people in Gilead as grain is threshed with iron rods. 4 So I will set fire to King Hazael’s palace, destroying the strong fortress of Ben-hadad. 5 I will
snap the bars that locked the gates of Damascus and kill her people as far away as the plain of Aven, and the people of Syria shall return to Kir[a] as slaves.”
The Lord has spoken.
6 The Lord says, “Gaza has sinned again and again, and I will not forget it. I will not leave her unpunished anymore. For she sent my people into exile, selling
them as slaves in Edom. 7 So I will set fire to the walls of Gaza, and all her forts shall be destroyed. 8 I will kill the people of Ashdod and destroy Ekron and the
king of Ashkelon; all Philistines left will perish.” The Lord has spoken.
9 The Lord says, “The people of Tyre have sinned again and again, and I will not forget it. I will not leave them unpunished anymore. For they broke their
treaty with their brother, Israel; they attacked and conquered him, and led him into slavery to Edom. 10 So I will set fire to the walls of Tyre, and it will burn
down all his forts and palaces.”
11 The Lord says, “Edom has sinned again and again, and I will not forget it. I will not leave him unpunished anymore. For he chased his brother, Israel, with
the sword; he was pitiless in unrelenting anger. 12 So I will set fire to Teman, and it will burn down all the forts of Bozrah.”[b]
13 The Lord says, “The people of Ammon have sinned again and again, and I will not forget it. I will not leave them unpunished anymore. For in their wars in
Gilead to enlarge their borders they committed cruel crimes, ripping open pregnant women with their swords.
14 “So I will set fire to the walls of Rabbah, and it will burn down their forts and palaces; there will be wild shouts of battle like a whirlwind in a mighty storm.
15 And their king and his princes will go into exile together.” The Lord has spoken.
2 The Lord says, “The people of Moab have sinned again and again, and I will not forget it. I will not leave them unpunished anymore. For they desecrated
the tombs of the kings of Edom, with no respect for the dead. 2 Now in return I will send fire upon Moab, and it will destroy all the palaces in Kerioth. Moab
shall go down in tumult as the warriors shout and trumpets blare. 3 And I will destroy their king and slay all the leaders under him.” The Lord has spoken.
4 The Lord says, “The people of Judah have sinned again and again, and I will not forget it. I will not leave them unpunished anymore. For they have rejected
the laws of God, refusing to obey him. They have hardened their hearts and sinned as their fathers did. 5 So I will destroy Judah with fire and burn down all
Jerusalem’s palaces and forts.”

Week 3: Amos

Amos begins by announcing God's judgment against Israel's surrounding nations:

- **Damascus**
- **Gaza**
- **Tyre**
- **Edom**
- **Ammon**
- **Moab**
- Then...
- **JUDAH**

You can imagine Israel listening:
“That's right, Amos! Preach!”
But then Amos turns toward them:
“Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of ISRAEL…”
— Amos 2:6
Suddenly, the sermon isn't about **them**.
It's about **us**.
Teaching Point
It's easy to recognize sin in others while overlooking what God wants to address in us.

Something to think about**:**
Are we more comfortable hearing sermons about “their” sins than allowing God's Word to examine ours?

Week 3: Amos

What Was Wrong in Israel?

God's Case Against Israel

Amos 2:6–8; 4:1; 5:11–12

Living Bible

6 The Lord says, “The people of Israel have sinned again and again, and I will not forget it. I will not leave them unpunished anymore. For they have perverted justice by
accepting bribes and sold into slavery the poor who can’t repay their debts; they trade them for a pair of shoes. 7 They trample the poor in the dust and kick aside the meek.
“And a man and his father defile the same temple girl, corrupting my holy name. 8 At their religious feasts they lounge in clothing stolen from their debtors, and in my own
Temple they offer sacrifices of wine they purchased with stolen money.

Amos identifies serious social injustice.

The wealthy were:

- **Exploiting the poor**
- **Oppressing the vulnerable**
- **Taking advantage of debtors**
- **Living extravagantly while others suffered**
- **Corrupting justice**
- **Accepting bribes**

Meanwhile...

- **Religious activity continued.**

People still:

- **Gathered for worship**
- **Offered sacrifices**
- **Sang songs**
- **Observed religious festivals**

That's the problem Amos exposes:

Their worship and their lives didn't match.

Week 3: Amos

When God Says, “Stop the Music”

Amos 5:21–23 (KJV)

21 I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.
22 Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.
23 Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

These are some of the strongest words in Amos.

God says:
“I hate, I despise your feast days…”
“I will not accept…”
“Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs…”
Imagine hearing God say:
“Stop singing.”
Why?
Not because singing was wrong.
Not because worship gatherings were wrong.
But because their worship had become **disconnected from their lives**.
They praised God in worship while mistreating people outside of worship.

Key Truth
Worship isn't authentic merely because it sounds good. Our lives must agree with what our mouths proclaim.

Week 3: Amos

Let Justice Roll

What Does God Want?
Immediately after rejecting their empty worship, God says:
Amos 5:24
“But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.”

Two important words:
Justice
Treating people rightly and ensuring that the vulnerable aren't exploited.
Righteousness
Living according to God's standards—in right relationship with God and others.
Notice the imagery.
God doesn't ask for an occasional **drop** of justice.
He wants:
A MIGHTY STREAM
Justice and righteousness should continually characterize God's people.
Key Truth
True worship flows from the sanctuary into the way we treat people.



Desert Oasis at Golden Hour

Week 3: Amos

The Plumb Line

How Do We Measure Up?

Amos 7:7–8 (NIV)

7 This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb,[a] with a plumb line[b] in his hand. 8 And the LORD asked me, “What do you see, Amos?”
“A plumb line,” I replied.
Then the Lord said, “Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.

Amos sees the Lord standing beside a wall with a:

PLUMB LINE

A plumb line was used by builders to determine whether something was **straight and properly aligned**. It can let you know whether a wall is crooked or not.

God uses the image to communicate that He is measuring Israel according to **His standard**.

This raises an important question:

Whose standard are we using?

- Culture?
- Other Christians?
- Our own opinions?
- Or God's Word?

Teaching Point

We don't determine God's standard by comparing ourselves with other people. God's Word is the plumb line.



In the Bible, a **plumb line** is a simple construction tool—a string with a weighted object (called a plumb bob) on the end—used to check if a wall is perfectly straight and vertica

Week 3: Amos

Judgment Isn’t the Final Word

There Is Still Hope
Much of Amos contains difficult warnings of judgment.
Israel has refused repeated opportunities to return.
Eventually, Assyria will conquer the Northern Kingdom in **722 BC**.
But Amos doesn't end with destruction.
Amos 9:11–15
11 In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:
12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this.
13 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.
14 And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.
15 And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.

God promises future:
- **Restoration**
- **Rebuilding**
- **Fruitfulness**
- **Renewal**

Amos 9:11
God promises to raise up the fallen **“tabernacle of David.”**
Then make your New Testament connection:
Amos 9 → Acts 15
In Acts 15:13–18, **James quotes Amos** during the Jerusalem Council while discussing God's work among the Gentiles.
Key Truth
God's judgment is serious—but God's redemptive purposes continue.

Discussion



Why do you think Amos begins by announcing judgment against Israel's neighbors before addressing Israel?

Discussion



Why do you think Amos begins by announcing judgment against Israel's neighbors before addressing Israel?

Why is it sometimes easier to recognize what's wrong with other people than to allow God's Word to examine us?



Discussion

How could Israel be extremely religious while simultaneously living contrary to God's will? Can that happen in the Church today?

What do you think God means when He tells Israel to take away the “noise” of their songs in Amos 5:23?



Discussion

What does Amos 5:24 teach us about the relationship between worship, justice, and righteousness?
What kinds of injustice or mistreatment of vulnerable people should Christians be attentive to today?

Amos 5:24
24 But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream



Discussion

What does the plumb line in Amos 7 teach us about God's standards? What “plumb lines” other than Scripture are we tempted to use?



Discussion

Why might prosperity make people spiritually complacent?



Discussion

Where do you see hope in a book containing so much judgment?

What is one area of your life where your actions could better reflect what you profess in worship?

Conclusion

What Does Amos Say to Us?

Bringing Amos Home
Amos forces us to ask some uncomfortable questions.

Ask Yourself:
1. Does my life Monday through Saturday agree with my worship on Sunday?
2. Am I concerned about things that concern God's heart?
3. How do I treat people who have less power, influence, or resources than I do?
4. Have comfort and prosperity made me spiritually complacent?
5. Am I measuring my life by culture—or by God's Word?

BIG IDEA
God doesn't simply want worship from our lips. He desires righteousness in our lives.

Closing Prayer Focus:
Lord, don't allow our worship to become disconnected from our lives. Examine us by the plumb line of Your Word. Show us where we have ignored injustice or become comfortable with things that grieve Your heart. Let righteousness and justice flow through our lives like a mighty stream. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Thank You

Presented by Rev. Dianne Tam