

His Word in Our Hearts

~ January 2021 ~

*The LORD is good,
a stronghold in the day of trouble;
he knows those who take refuge in him.
Nahum 1:7 (ESV)*

Daily Bible Reading

1	Hosea 1-3	Psalm 1
2	Hosea 4-6	Psalm 2
3	Hosea 7-8	Psalm 3
4	Hosea 9-12	Psalm 4
5	Hosea 13-14	Psalm 5
6	Joel 1	Psalm 6
7	Joel 2-3	Psalm 7
8	Amos 1-2	Psalm 8
9	Amos 3-4	Psalm 9
10	Amos 5-6	Psalm 10
11	Amos 7-9	Psalm 11
12	Obadiah 1-21	Psalm 12
13	Jonah 1-4	Psalm 13
14	Micah 1-3	Psalm 14
15	Micah 4-5	Psalm 15
16	Micah 6-7	Psalm 16
17	Nahum 1-3	Psalm 17
18	Habakkuk 1-3	Psalm 18:1-25
19	Zephaniah 1-2	Psalm 18:26-40
20	Zephaniah 3	Psalm 19
21	Haggai 1-2	Psalm 20
22	Zachariah 1-5	Psalm 21
23	Zachariah 6-9	Psalm 22:1-11
24	Zachariah 10-14	Psalm 22:12-31
25	Malachi 1-4	Psalm 23

Reading the Minor Prophets

The Major Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, are listed first not because of importance but because of the length of their books. The Minor Prophets are minor only because their books are shorter, and it may be that these twelve all fit on one manuscript or papyrus scroll.

Through the themes of sin, judgment, and restoration, they detail Israel's spiritual unfaithfulness and God's promise of divine faithfulness. Clearly God is up to something here and He deems it very important.

The Prophets saw everything in relation to God, everything. The rise and fall of kings and nations, the plagues of locust in Joel and whoring after idols in Hosea and the storm that got Jonah tossed overboard, and the rise of wicked nations that defeated the people of God.

The Prophets call us out of superficiality. The Prophets call us out of secularism and materialism. The Prophets call us out of the incipient atheism that dominates our culture and our media and our education.

The Prophets remind us that we do not live in a closed universe, but in an open universe. The Prophets reminds us that there is a God and He is here and He is not silent, He has spoken loud and clear.

Finally the Prophets remind us what matters most. That there is a coming Messiah. God has invaded our world and come in the flesh. This matters supremely. This changes everything. This turns our world upside down. This changes how you and I think about today and tomorrow and next week and the year ahead. God is moving and He is writing His history through our world and our lives.

There are ***three major historical events around which all the writing prophets prophesied.*** Each of these three events have a group of prophets who addressed these key events.

Hosea, Amos and Jonah are the earliest. ***Hosea and Amos*** are the only two to prophecy to the northern kingdom of Israel before northern Israel was led into exile by the Assyrians. This would be from around 760 to 722 BC.

Jonah was a prophet of Israel who went to Nineveh, which was the capital of the hated nation of Assyria.

All the rest of the Minor Prophets prophesied to Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel. Six prophecy before Judah goes into exile in 587BC, ***Joel, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk***; and the last three, ***Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*** are prophets in Judah after Judah returns from exile under Ezra and Nehemiah from around 536 to 430 BC.

Reading the Minor Prophets, cont.

How are these books relevant to us? Listen to just four things going on then and see if it doesn't sound familiar.

First, it was a time of unprecedented economic, social, political and military upheaval. The world was changing dramatically. All of this could describe our nation and our world.

Second, it was a time of enormous religious unfaithfulness and disregard for the Ten Commandments, a time of rebellion, idolatry and rampant disobedience against God and His law. There was a mixing of religions and religious practices and a pursuit of spiritualism. Again this describes our culture and our context. Especially interesting to know is the spiritual decline in Israel followed a period of unprecedented prosperity and success and growth.

Third, it was a time of shifting populations and national boundaries. Whole populations were being moved, immigration and migration on huge scales. We see the immigration issue in our own country and the forced movement of populations in the middle east and Africa.

Fourth, the nation of Israel was permanently divided. A nation divided will not stand. Our nation is split just about down the middle into red states and blue states. Other nations today face division, Korea, Sudan, Nigeria, and the Middle East.

The Minor Prophets stand out as particularly applicable in light of national and world events. Much of what is written in the Minor Prophets could be tomorrow's headlines. Political intrigue, wars and rumors of wars, changes in power structures, old régimes falling and new ones rising.

Where is God in all of this and what is God saying to us today? Somehow these ancient words are still and forever true.

Group	Book	Approximate Dates
Pre-Exilic Prophets of Israel	Jonah (preached to Nineveh)	780-850
	Amos	765-750
	Hosea	755-715
Prophets of Judah	Obadiah	840
	Joel	835-796
	Micah	740-690
	Nahum	630-612
	Habakkuk	606-604
	Zephaniah	625
Post-Exilic Prophets of the Returned Remnant	Haggai	520
	Zechariah	515
	Malachi	430