The Twelve Minor Prophets

**Hosea (14 Chapters):** Native of Israel (Northern Kingdom). Book in two parts: Ch. 1-3 and Ch. 4-14. Main message is redeeming love: the Lord wants steadfast love and knowledge of God, wants people to know God and in knowing will love. Preaches to Northern Kingdom. Story of Gomer – Hosea deals with Gomer as God deals with Israel.

**Joel (3 Chapters):** Joes is a common name. Native of Judah (Southern Kingdom). Known as a “cultic prophet,” meaning he knows liturgical forms, rituals, and Temple practices. Most likely was a Temple priest himself. Views a locust plague as God’s judgement on people and calls on them to repent. Preaches about the advent of the Lord and final judgements and blessings.

**Amos (9 Chapters):** Preaches in a peaceful time in Israel. Native of Judah and shepherd by trade, he goes to Israel to denounce their reliance on military might, social injustice, and immorality. This preaching caused conflict. This book was influential to later thought on God and human history.

**Obadiah (1 Chapter):** Writes about justice and judgement for Israel, especially over Edom (Jacob over Esau). Wants redemption for Israel and exiles to be brought back to the Promised Land.

**Jonah (4 Chapters):** Native of Galilee. Though believed to be authored in the 300s BCE, it is written about a prophet in the early to mid 700s BCE who was a counselor to Jereboam II during his conflict with the Syrians. Book is written in prose rather than poetry and contains no oracles, but is written about the prophet himself. Book covers breadth of God’s saving love and wideness of God’s mercy to all nations.
**Micah (7 Chapters):** A native of SW Jerusalem and young contemporary of Isaiah. Along with Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, preaches of true worship of the Lord and sound justice. Not afraid to preach against God’s people in order to bring judgement, divine forgiveness, and hope. He speaks against Jerusalem and predicts her fall. Makes great statement about Shepherd-King from Bethlehem.

**Nahum (3 Chapters):** Most likely from Judah. Prophesies about the demise of Assyria (Ninevah) as judgement from the Lord for being an unscrupulous and defiant nation. Does not say anything specific about justice for Israel, but makes a bold statement against sin.

**Habakkuk (3 Chapters):** Book is in three sections: dialogue between Habakkuk and God, five woes against a wicked nation, and a poem meant for liturgical use. Focuses on Theodicy – justification of the ways of God. Asks why does a just God allow bad things, but learns God is always sovereign and will work things out in God’s time.

**Zephaniah (3 Chapters):** He is of royal descent. Ancestry links him back to Hezekiah of Judah who was favorably influenced by the preaching of Isaiah and Micah, but his ministry was during the reign of Josiah in Israel. He knows Jerusalem well and knows religious/liturgical practices. He preaches against corrupt practices and religious perversions. Book is in three sections: Preaching in Judah, divine judgement against other nations and a call to repent, and condemnation of Israel while offering hope to those who wait patiently for the Lord.

**Haggai (2 Chapters):** A contemporary of Zechariah. Book written in prose. He oversees the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. Exhorts Governor and High Priest to take leadership roles in Judah during the reconstruction. Preached against religious corruption and practices, but also speaks of Messianic age to come.
Zechariah (14 Chapters): Similar to Haggai, but more apocalyptic in Ch. 1-8. While themes are similar to Haggai, he points to Shepherd, Prince of Peace, and NT times. Ch. 9-14 differs much from first part of book and was most likely written 200 years later by one of his disciples.

Malachi (4 Chapters): A prophetic voice dedicated to the Temple. He has a high view of priesthood. Uses a question and answer method to make his arguments. He speaks of sin, judgement, and repentance leading to the Advent of the Lord. Stresses fidelity to the Lord’s covenant and its teachings. Speaks of a forerunner to prepare the way for the Messiah.