



Minor prophets—major message

Hosea

“I would like to bless my people with great success again.” Hosea 6:11 (NIRV). Do you like these words? The message is striking because it’s in a setting of judgement. God is saying, “Because of your sins, doom is coming. But I’m not about doom. I want to bless you with success!” God wants success for you. Here’s how it happens: “It is time to seek the Lord. When you do, he will come and shower his blessings on you.” Hosea 10:12 (NIRV). Today, will you make good time to seek the Lord, directing your eyes to him? Sometimes your trek will be stormy, but seek the Lord, and you’ll be drenched with showers of blessing.

Joel

Here’s your past: “He is faithful. He has sent you plenty of showers.” Here’s your present: “Come to the house of the Lord your God. And pray to him.” And here’s your future: “After that, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.” Joel 2:23; 1:14; 2:28 (NIRV). Your life in a nutshell. Your past—already blessed by God’s Spirit. Your present—come now into prayer. Your future—expect an outpouring of God’s Spirit, regardless of your gender, age, or status in life. If it doesn’t look promising right now, don’t worry. Things were far from promising when God gave the promise through Joel. But Messiah came to Israel. And he will come to you, too.

Amos

“Prepare to meet your God!” Amos 4:12 (NIRV). A tough message that God commissioned through a guy who never wanted to be a prophet—he just wanted to be a shepherd-farmer. Imagine how you’d feel if you were called out of your fields to tell your friends and fellow citizens they were judged by God! But Amos carried good news, too. “Look to what is good, not to what is evil. Then you will live.” Amos 5:14 (NIRV). If people would look to him and turn to him, God would bring them home. Amos 9:14. A simple message—universal truth for ancient and modern times. Today, are you looking to what is good, and not to what is evil?

Obdiah

It’s the only Old Testament book with just one chapter. We don’t even know who Obdiah was, other than a prophet. The chapter is an oracle of judgement against a nation that pounced on God’s people in their weakness, then celebrated with a party. But wait ... there’s more. “On Mount Zion some of my people will be left alive. I will save them. Zion will be my holy mountain once again.” There are times in church and personal history when good is squashed by evil. But wait ... there’s more. Heaven steps in. Out of rubble rises restoration. Out of loss comes life. Out of grief springs goodness. Praise God—he is Lord, and he wins!

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Jonah

The headline should not be “Whale Swallows Prophet”. The headline is, “City Converts to God”. The main story is not a reluctant prophet. The main story is the reluctant Judge. Prayer gets this story on track. “When my life was nearly over, I remembered you, Lord. My prayer rose up to you. It reached you in your holy temple in heaven.” Jonah 2:7 (NIRV). God the Judge is in that temple—and he can’t help but be gracious, tender, slow to anger, and full of love. Jonah 4:2. More than 120,000 people, from the king in the palace to workers in the fields, receive God as Saviour and Lord. Will you join me in a *Hallelujah* on this one?

Micah

Ever strolled along a beach, and stumbled on a treasure? The treasure can change your day. It’s like this, reading the book of Micah. Suddenly these words appear: “Bethlehem Ephrathah, you might not be an important town in the nation of Judah. But out of you will come for me a ruler over Israel.” Micah 5:2 (NIRV). Spectacular! The town of Messiah’s birth is publicly declared, more than seven centuries before it happens. It’s enough to spoil the week for an atheist. But the message can lead to a great life for all who choose to believe. “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord.” Luke 2:11 (NIRV).

Nahum

I’ll bet you’ve never heard a sermon on the book of Nahum. It’s an oracle against an evil nation—“Armies are coming to attack you. Guard the forts! Watch the roads! Get ready!” Nahum 2:1 (NIRV). Yes, it’s a negative message—but at least God is transparent and honest. Do you wonder what God is saying about your nation, or other nations today? Then there’s this, out of the blue: “The Lord is good. When people are in trouble, they can go to him for safety. He takes good care of those who trust in him.” Nahum 1:7 (NIRV). Read these words again. Praise God for his care for you. And pray for your nation, that it might look to God.

Habakkuk

It opens with a complaint against God. “Lord, how long do I have to call out for help? Why don’t you listen to me? How long must I keep telling you that things are terrible?” Habakkuk 1:2 (NIRV). Gotta love this—it’s *real*. This could be your complaint, or mine. Gotta love God, too. He responds in two points. First, *Stand by and watch—I’m going to do something incredible*. Second, *It will happen at the time I’ve appointed—it might take a while, but wait for it*. The prophet is satisfied. “I will still be glad because of what the Lord has done. God my Savior fills me with joy. The Lord and King gives me strength.” Habakkuk 3:18–19 (NIRV). Yes! Amen.

Zephaniah

“The day of the Lord is near.” *Judgement!* we think. We’re right, but less than half right. In Scripture, the day of the Lord is more pointedly the day of salvation! And it’s not primarily the last day on Earth—it’s first and foremost the day of the Cross. Here’s the Spirit in Zephaniah: “The day of the Lord is near. The Lord has prepared a sacrifice. He has set apart for himself the people he has invited.” The Gospel in a few words! Messiah—the sacrifice prepared. You and I are invited into this sacrifice. “I will gather you together. And I will bring you home.” In your experience, will you make today the day of the Cross? Zephaniah 1:7 & 3:20 (NIRV).

Haggai

Crops failing, supplies down, funds lacking, mission stalled, grief, discouragement, preoccupation—it isn’t pretty in the church or the land. Then comes a message the people need. “Be strong. My Spirit is still with you. I’m providing the funds you need. Don’t be afraid. Make a start.” Can you use this specific message today? There’s more. “I know you’ve been down and out. But write down today’s date, because from this day forward, I’m blessing you. I accept your feeble effort to put me first. From this point, I guarantee to take your failure and turn it into success.” If you like good news like this, you’ll love the God who gives it.

Zechariah

Zechariah is a gold mine, with at least 15 strands of gold in it. One of the strands is about the high priest, named Joshua. The devil attacks Joshua, but God knocks out the devil. Then God takes away Joshua’s dirty clothes of poverty, replacing them with the garments of a king. Transformation! “I have taken your sin away.” Zechariah 3:3 (NIRV). Then, God installs Joshua as the head of the temple. It’s all about *Jesus*, of course—“Joshua” in the Old Testament is “Jesus” in the New. And it’s all about you and me. We are all grimy “Joshuas” who now stand in Jesus—delivered, clothed, transformed, sin taken away, sparkling clean, fit for the temple.

Malachi

The 12 so-called “minor prophets” punch way above their weight. Judgement, mercy, Messiah, trust, and blessing—it’s all there. An incredible foretaste of Jesus and his 12 disciples, coming to the table hundreds of years later. Malachi adds some spice. “Test me!” says the Lord. Have you tested God lately? Try it! Selfishness or fear keeps us from generosity with the finances God gives us. *Change this!* says God. “Then you will see that I will throw open the windows of heaven. I will pour out so many blessings that you will not have enough room to store them.” Malachi 3:10 (NIRV). Let’s get this right. Let’s create a storage problem for God’s blessings.