

# OT SURVEY: PROPHETS

## WEEK 1: JONAH, AMOS AND MICAH

### INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

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- We are going to take the next 6 weeks and work through the Old Testament prophets!
- This will be an overview of the books in their particular group.
- During each teaching, after an overview has been done, we are going to dive into some of the areas of special interest to us and learn more about what was going on in that particular book.
- **There are two goals:** to have a general working knowledge of each of the prophetic books in the Old Testament and to have the confidence to be able to study them on our own.
- As we study these books, we want to pay special attention to what God is doing through these prophets, how the prophets themselves respond, what the message of the prophets is, and how those being prophesied to respond to their words.
- Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah:
  - **11/10: The Prophets of the Neo-Assyrian Period (Jonah, Micah and Amos)**
  - 11/17: The Prophets of the Neo-Assyrian Period (Hosea and Isaiah)
- Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Nahum, Ezekiel, Obadiah, Lamentations
  - 11/24: The Prophets of the Neo-Babylonian Period
  - 12/01: The Prophets of the Neo-Babylonian Period
- Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, Joel, Malachi
  - 12/08: The Prophets of the Persian Period
  - 12/15: The Prophets of the Persian Period

### INTRODUCTION AND WHY WE SHOULD STUDY THEM

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- These prophetic books are all rooted in the teaching of the Law, the five books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy). What God promised in those books, especially Deuteronomy, was coming to pass. The prophets warned of the fulfillment of the curses that God promised His people if they rejected Him. This warning came true for Israel, the ten northern tribes, in 721 BC with the invasion by Assyria, and for Judah, the two southern tribes, in 586 BC with the invasion by Babylon.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://fbchurch.org/resource/read-the-old-testament-prophetic-books>

- It is not just judgment and wrath, though, that we hear foretold in Deuteronomy and described in the prophetic books. It is the subsequent restoration and salvation of the remnant of Israel and Judah and the nations! We see dramatic and powerful descriptions not only of judgment but of salvation! In these sections, we see many things that point to Christ and how He will save His people from all the nations.<sup>2</sup>

<b>Comparison of the Four Major Prophets</b>				
	<b>Isaiah</b>	<b>Jeremiah</b>	<b>Ezekiel</b>	<b>Daniel</b>
Prophesied To:	Jews in Judea	Jews in Judea and captivity	Jews captive in Babylon	Jews captive in Babylon and Gentile kings
Concerning:	Judah and Jerusalem ( <a href="#">Isa. 1:1; 2:1</a> )	Judah and Nations ( <a href="#">Jer. 1:5, 9-10; 2:1-2</a> )	The whole house of Israel ( <a href="#">Ezek. 2:3-6; 3:4-10, 17</a> )	Israel and Gentile Nations ( <a href="#">Dan. 2:36ff; 9</a> )
During the reigns of:	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah (kings of Judah)	Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah (kings of Judah)	Zedekiah (king of Judah); Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon)	Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah (kings of Judah). Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon)
Dates:	740-680 B.C.	627-585 B.C.	592-570 B.C.	605-536 B.C.
Historical Setting:	<a href="#">2 Kings 15-21</a> ; <a href="#">2 Chronicles 26-30</a>	<a href="#">2 Kings 22-25</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 1-6</a>	<a href="#">Daniel 1-6</a>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

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

## THE BOOK OF AMOS<sup>3</sup>

- Written about 760 B.C.
- According to **verse 1**, Amos tells us that he was a contemporary of Uzziah and Jeroboam II and prophesied “in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah (790-739 b.c), and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, King of Israel (793-753 b.c), two years before the earthquake” (1:1). Amos probably prophesied in the period from 767-753. We are also told that he prophesied “two years before the earthquake,” but the precise date of this event is not known.
- **Title of the Book:** The name Amos comes from the Hebrew *áa,mas*, “to lift a burden, carry.” His name means “burden” or “Burden-bearer,” which is entirely fitting for the burden given to him. Though from Judah rather than the Northern Kingdom of Israel, he was given the burden of carrying a message of warning against the greed, injustice, externalism, and self-righteousness of the Northern Kingdom. Amos should not be confused with Amoz, the father of Isaiah (Isa. 1:1).

<sup>3</sup> <https://bible.org/seriespage/minor-prophets>

- **Theme and Purpose:** The divine message given to Amos was primarily one of judgment, though it ends with words of hope. Amos warned that the Lord God, the sovereign Ruler of the universe, would come as a Warrior to judge the nations that had rebelled against His authority. Israel in particular would be punished for her violations against God’s covenant. Amos sought to bring the prosperous and materialistic northern tribes under Jeroboam to repentance as the only escape from imminent judgment. In the process, the book demonstrates God’s hatred of evil because of His holiness and that His justice must act against Israel’s sin for He cannot allow it to go unpunished.
- However, even though the nation would be destroyed, God would still preserve a repentant remnant and one day this remnant would be restored to their covenant blessing and political prominence when the Lord would then also draw all nations to His Himself.
- **Amos addresses Israel’s two primary sins:** 1) an absence of true worship, and 2) a lack of justice. In the midst of their ritualistic performance of worship, they were not pursuing the Lord with their hearts (4:4,5; 5:4–6) nor following His standard of justice with their neighbors (5:10–13; 6:12). This apostasy, evidenced by **continual, willful rejection** of the prophetic message of Amos, is promised divine judgment. Because of His covenant, however, the Lord will not abandon Israel altogether but will bring future restoration to the righteous remnant (9:7–15).<sup>4</sup>

## Noteworthy Verses

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- **Amos 1:2** “He said, ‘The LORD roars from Zion And from Jerusalem He utters His voice; and the shepherds' pasture grounds mourn, and the summit of Carmel dries up.’”
  - Amos’ theme is that Israel and the other nations were about to be violently judged for their sins. He pictured the Lord as a lion who had roared and begun His attack. A lion’s terrifying roar paralyzes its victim with fear, making it helpless before the lion’s charge. Then the pounce, the tearing, and death are inevitable.<sup>5</sup>
- **Amos 9:11-15** “In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old; That they may possess the remnant of Edom And all the nations who are called by My name,’ Declares the LORD who does this. ‘Behold, days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘When the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; when the mountains will drip sweet wine and all the hills will be dissolved. also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; they will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit. ‘I will also plant them on

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gty.org/library/bible-introductions/MSB30>

<sup>5</sup> Walvoord, Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1427.

their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them,' says the LORD your God.”

- What is the main point of this passage? What is the simple, literal reading?
  - Amos 9:11–15 anticipates the future in very concrete physical/geographical dimensions. It underscores the nationalistic aspect of Israel’s eschatological hopes. It anticipates a restoring of the captivity of Israel, a rebuilding of their ruined cities, a planting of vineyards, and a permanent establishment of the nation in the land. The fallen dynasty of David shall be restored, and geographical expansion of the reestablished kingdom shall include Edom specifically and all nations ultimately. These physical/geographical aspects permeate the prophecy of Amos 9:11–15 and inevitably raise questions about the relation of Old Covenant anticipation to New Covenant realization.<sup>6</sup>
- James uses these verses in **Acts 15:15-18** when speaking of the Gentiles being saved and subsequently brought into the church.
- Dispensationally, this is the most important passage in the New Testament. It gives the divine purpose for this age, and for the beginning of the next<sup>7</sup>
  - **The Covenantal view of these verses:**
    - This is the main concept James wished to develop. In the Gentiles, God was choosing a people for himself, a new *restored* people of God, Jew and Gentile in Christ, the true Israel. In the total message of Acts it is clear that the rebuilt house of David occurred in the Messiah. Christ was the scion (heir) of David who fulfilled the covenant of David and established a kingdom that would last forever (2 Sam 7:12f.; cf. Acts 13:32–34). From the beginning the Jewish Christians had realized that the promises to David were fulfilled in Christ. What they were now beginning to see, and what James saw foretold in Amos, was that these promises included the Gentiles.<sup>8</sup>
  - **The Dispensational view of these verses:**
    - According to dispensational interpretation, this passage (1) explains what God now is doing with the non-Jewish population of the world, (2) describes God’s distinctive plan for ethnic Israel in the future, and (3) shows how these two programs for the ages relate to one another both temporally and principally. *Now* God is calling out a Gentile people to himself. *In the future* he shall fulfill the specific geographic-political promises he has

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<sup>6</sup> O. Palmer Robertson, “Hermeneutics of Continuity,” in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments : Essays in Honor of S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.*, ed. John S. Feinberg (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1988), 88–89.

<sup>7</sup> O. Palmer Robertson, 90.

<sup>8</sup> John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 330.

made to ethnic Israel. These two programs must not be confused, since they follow upon one another temporally. Yet some of the same principles which shall be operative in the coming future age of the Jewish kingdom are operative now.<sup>9</sup>

## THE BOOK OF JONAH

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- As a prophet to the 10 northern tribes of Israel, **Jonah shares a background and setting with Amos.** The nation enjoyed a time of relative peace and prosperity. Both Syria and Assyria were weak, allowing Jeroboam II to enlarge the northern borders of Israel to where they had been in the days of David and Solomon (2 Kin. 14:23–27). Spiritually, however, it was a time of poverty; religion was ritualistic and increasingly idolatrous, and justice had become perverted. Peacetime and wealth had made her bankrupt spiritually, morally, and ethically (cf. 2 Kin. 14:24; Amos 4:1ff.; 5:10–13). As a result, God was to punish her by bringing destruction and captivity from the Assyrians in 722 B.C. **Nineveh’s repentance may have been aided by the two plagues (765 and 759 B.C.) and a solar eclipse (763 B.C.), preparing them for Jonah’s judgment message.**<sup>10</sup>
- Jonah clearly demonstrates that the God of the Hebrews (1) **has concern for the whole world**, (2) **is sovereign over nature and all human affairs.** Jonah demonstrates that “salvation is of the Lord” (2:9), and that God’s gracious offer of salvation extends to all who repent and turn to Him. The book also demonstrates how our prejudices like Jonah’s warped sense of Jewish nationalism can hinder us from following the will of God.<sup>11</sup>

## THE BOOK OF MICAH<sup>12</sup>

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- Little is known about the author of this book other than what can be learned from the book itself and from Jeremiah 26:18. The name Micah is a shortened form of Micaiah, which means “Who is like Yahweh?” Micah suggests this truth in 7:18 when he said, “Who is a God like You?” In Jeremiah’s day the elders referred to Micah and quoted Micah 3:12 in defense of Jeremiah’s message of judgment on the nation (Jer. 26:18).
- Micah was from Moresheth (Micah 1:1; cf. 1:14), a town in Judea about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem near the Philistine city of Gath. Moresheth was located in Judah’s fertile foothills near Lachish, an international trading town.

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<sup>9</sup> O. Palmer Robertson, 98.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gty.org/library/bible-introductions/MSB32>

<sup>11</sup> [https://bible.org/seriespage/minor-prophets#P2096\\_225475](https://bible.org/seriespage/minor-prophets#P2096_225475)

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

- **Date:** Micah tells us he prophesied during the days of Jotham (750-732), Ahaz (736-716) and Hezekiah (716-687) (1:1). Micah speaks primarily to Judah, but since he also speaks to the Northern Kingdom of Israel and predicts the fall of Samaria (1:6), a good part of his ministry occurred before the Assyrian captivity in 722 B.C., probably around 700 B.C.
- **Theme and Purpose:** Micah shows how the people had failed to live up to the covenant stipulations God had made with Israel in which there would be blessing for obedience (Deut. 28:1-14) and cursing for disobedience and eventually cast from the land of promise (Deut. 28:15-68). In the process, Micah exposed the injustice of Judah and declared the righteousness and justice of Yahweh showing He was just in disciplining them. He indicts Israel and Judah for sins like oppression, bribery among the judges, prophets, and priests, and for covetousness, cheating, pride, and violence. Of course, this discipline on the nation demonstrated His love for them and that He would restore them.
- The theme of judgment is prominent in each of Micah's three messages, but he also stressed the truth of restoration. Further, Micah referred to the principle of the remnant in each of his three messages (Micah 2:12; 4:7; 5:7-8; 7:18). He declared that in the future Yahweh would restore the people of Israel to a place of prominence in the world under the coming Messiah.

## Noteworthy Verses

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- **Micah 4:1-5** "And it will come about in the last days That the mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, And the peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion will go forth the law, Even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between many peoples And render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they train for war. Each of them will sit under his vine And under his fig tree, With no one to make them afraid, For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. Though all the peoples walk Each in the name of his god, As for us, we will walk In the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.