

# Hosea

## The Prophet & the Slut

<b>Author:</b> Hosea
<b>Time:</b> 755-735ish BC
<b>Place:</b> Israel
<b>Verse:</b> 14:4 Then I will cure you of idolatry and faithlessness, and my love will know no bounds, for my anger will be forever gone!

### **Hosea's Cheating Wife:** *but he is faithful*

- 1 **Hooker.** God tells Hosea to marry a prostitute & have kids, because Israel has become a prostitute; but one day they will come back
- 2 **Punishment.** Hosea disowns her, throws her out, & stops her partying; but God will court Israel again, & bring peace & prosperity
- 3 **Reunited.** God tells Hosea to find his wife & love her, because he loves Israel although they worship false gods; his wife returns — so will Israel

### **God's Cheating people:** *but he is faithful, too*

- 4-7 **Israel's sin.** God is awesome & still in charge; he will restore Israel, destroy Babylon & her idols
- 8-10 **Punishment.** Israel will be attacked by enemies; they will be scattered, slaughtered, & destroyed
- 11-14 **Reunited.** God shows great love for his people; they will still be unfaithful, but if they come back to him he will restore & prosper them

*\*Hosea is known as the 'broken-hearted prophet.'*

Famous passage:

6:3 **So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord**

# Joel

## Day of the Lord

<b>Author:</b> Joel
<b>Time:</b> sometime between 835-820 BC
<b>Place:</b> Judah
<b>Verse:</b> 2:1 Sound the alarm in Jerusalem! Let the blast of the warning trumpet be heard upon my holy mountain! Let everyone tremble in fear, for the day of the Lord's judgment approaches

### Judgment Now:

- 1:1-12 **Locusts.** Joel vividly describes an invasion of insects that destroy the land
- 1:13-20 **Draught.** The land is barren; the priests are begged to do something
- 2:1-11 **Invasion.** He compares the locust attack to a huge army that attacks everyone and everything
- 2:12-17 **Plea.** Joel begs the people to turn to God, fast, & pray so that God will have mercy on them

### Judgment in the Future:

- 2:18-27 **Mercy.** God will hear & bless his people; their country will be alive again
- 2:28-32 **Preparation.** God will pour out his Spirit; weird things will happen to signal the Day of the Lord
- 3:1-16 **Gentiles too.** On the Day of the Lord, he will judge all nations for their sins
- 3:16-21 **Restoration.** God will save his people & preserve them forever

Famous passages:

- 2:28 **your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions**  
2:32 **whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved**

# Amos

## Ripe for Judgment

<b>Author:</b> Amos - rancher from Judah
<b>Time:</b> 760ish BC
<b>Place:</b> Israel
<b>Verse:</b> 4:12 Therefore I will bring upon you all those further evils I have spoken of. Prepare to meet your God in judgment, Israel.

**Declarations:** *messages of judgment for rottenness*

- 1-2:5 **For everyone.** God promises to send fire to punish the sins of different nations around Israel & Judah; then Judah, then the bullseye:
- 2:6-16 **For Israel.** His people have become greedy, immoral, pagan drunks; he will ruin all of them from top to bottom

**Proclamations:** *3 sermons against Israel*

- 3 **Present.** Israel is rotten — God will send an enemy to destroy it
- 4 **Past.** Warnings for greedy wives & pagan worshipers; God has brought judgment before, but they never return to him
- 5-6 **Future.** God will bring ultimate despair & ruin; the dishonest people take bribes, rob the poor, & make an empty show of religion; he will make them slaves & destroy their riches & pride

**Revelations:** *visions of judgment, promise of hope*

- 7-9:10 **Visions.** God gives Amos 5 visions that show that Israel is rotten; he will judge & destroy them; Amaziah the priest tries to stop Amos
- 9:11-15 **Promise.** One day Israel will be fully restored, happy, & prosperous

# Obadiah

## O Bad Edom!

<b>Author:</b> Obadiah
<b>Time:</b> 840ish BC
<b>Place:</b> Edom (Southeast of the Dead Sea)
<b>Verse:</b> 15 The Lord's vengeance will soon fall upon all Gentile nations. As you have done to Israel, so it will be done to you. Your acts will boomerang upon your heads.

### Edom Gets It:

- 1-9      **Destruction.** The smug Edomites feel safe in the mountains, but God promises to send enemies to completely ruin them
- 10-16   **Cause.** The Edomites have always been hostile to God's people, & they've helped Israel's enemies
- 17-21   **Israel rules.** God's people will return, prosper, & take over Edom

*\*There is some disagreement over when Obadiah wrote, but if 840 is about right, he is the very first prophet to write a book.*

*\*The people of Edom trace back to Jacob's brother **Esau**, who was nick-named 'Edom' ('red') because he sold his birthright to Jacob for some chili-like stew.*

*Later, Esau forgave Jacob for his trickery, & they made up, but Jacob still kept the birthright (which included family lineage, blessing, property, etc) — Esau's descendants, who maybe still felt like outsiders, were always enemies of Jacob's descendants.*

*\*Remember that Jacob had a nickname, too: **Israel**. The Jews are called the children of Israel because they can trace their lineage back to Jacob & his 12 sons.*

# Jonah

## The Reluctant Prophet

<b>Author:</b> prob <b>Jonah</b>
<b>Time:</b> sometime between <b>785-760 BC</b>
<b>Place:</b> <b>Nineveh</b> , capital of Assyria
<b>Verse:</b> <b>4:2</b> He complained to the Lord about it: ‘This is exactly what I thought you’d do, Lord...That’s why I ran away to Tarshish. For I knew you were a gracious God, merciful, slow to get angry, and full of kindness; I knew you could cancel your plans for destroying these people.’.

### Jonah Runs, God Reigns:

- 1 On the run.** God tells Jonah to warn this cruel city of judgment & destruction; afraid, Jonah takes a ship in the other direction; a storm comes & Jonah admits it's because he's running from God; the other sailors throw him overboard, the storm stops, & the sailors worship God; a giant fish swallows Jonah
- 2 Prayer.** Jonah prays for God to save him; the fish spits him out on dry land

### Jonah Preaches, God Saves: *but Jonah’s still a jerk*

- 3 Take 2.** God tells him to go again; he does, & when he shouts of doom the Ninevites repent & beg God for mercy; he spares them
- 4 Sulking.** Jonah is mad that God forgave these horrible pagans; he also gets mad when a shade tree withers; God gently rebukes him for being upset about the tree but not about 120,000 lost people

*\*The name Nineveh is related to the Assyrian word for fish, and the cuneiform symbol looks like a fish...*

# Micah

## Justice & Mercy

<b>Author:</b> Micah
<b>Time:</b> 740ish-690ish BC
<b>Place:</b> Judah
<b>Verse:</b> 6:8 No, he has told you what he wants, and this is all it is: to be fair and just and merciful, and to walk humbly with your God.

### Judgment Now, Blessing Later:

- 1-2 Rotten people.** Samaria in the north and Judah in the south are full of idolatrous and cruel people; God will punish them; but the Messiah will bring them back to God
- 3 Rotten leaders.** Judah's rulers are cruel & unjust — they oppress the people; prophets charge big bucks for happy-face preaching; God will ruin the place because of them
- 4-5 Coming kingdom.** God will restore Israel & bring peace; Babylon will take them captive, but they will return; a King will protect God's people, & idolatry will be gone

### God the Judge & Pardon:

- 6-7:6 The case.** God has been good to us, but we have been rotten; all he asks is that we love each other & him, but instead his people love extortion, violence, lying, & bribery
- 7:7-20 The pardon.** Micah declares his trust in God; He will one day save his people miraculously, throw their sins out to sea & bless them forever

# Nahum

## The Bullies Get Beat

<b>Author:</b> Nahum
<b>Time:</b> between 663-612 BC
<b>Places:</b> Nineveh, capital of Assyria
<b>Verse:</b> 3:1 Woe to Nineveh, City of Blood, full of lies, crammed with plunder.

### 3 Songs of Doom:

- 1** **Nineveh's judge.** Nahum states that the all-powerful God jealously defends his people: Nineveh will fall & Judah will be safe
- 2-3:3** **Nineveh's fall.** Nahum vividly describes the city being sacked; flooded, & destroyed; Nineveh's once proud people will quake with fear, groan with pain, & die
- 3:4-19** **Nineveh's sin.** God will wreck them because of their idolatry, sorcery & cruelty; they will be humiliated & sacked worse than the cities *they* had sacked; there is no hope for Nineveh — they will be scattered; the nations they abused will be glad to hear it

*\*Keep in mind that Nahum is the sequel to Jonah; about 100 years after their incredible conversion they were just as bad as ever.*

# Habakkuk

## Death for the Wicked, Faith for the Good

<b>Author:</b> Habakkuk
<b>Time:</b> sometime between 625-605 BC
<b>Place:</b> Judah
<b>Verse:</b> 2:4 Note this: Wicked men trust themselves alone, and fail; but the righteous man trusts in me, and lives!

### Conversations With God: *2 tough questions, 2 tough answers*

- 1:1-11 **Judah punished.** Habakkuk asks, How can you allow such rottenness in your people? God answers, I won't for long — the Chaldeans are coming; they'll destroy my wicked people
- 1:12-2:1 **Punishers.** Hab is more confused: how can you use an evil nation to carry out your will? Will you be silent while your people are killed by worse people? Will the Chaldeans get away with *their* wrongs?
- 2:2-20 **Answer.** God sees their aggression, torture, violence, inhumanity & idolatry; they'll be punished & the just will live by their faith; someday *all* people will be silent before God

### Song of Faith: *this doubter winds up with certainty*

- 3 **Answers.** Habakkuk sings a great prayer that God *will* punish all wrong, but save all those who believe

*\*A note to a choir director at the end says that this is a song to be accompanied by stringed instruments.*

*\*Habakkuk is a compelling book for answers about the Nazis & others who do violence to God's people.*

Famous passage:

3:19 **hinds' feet in high places...**



# Zephaniah

## Last Call

<b>Author:</b> Zephaniah - great-great-grandson of Hezekiah
<b>Time:</b> 625ish BC
<b>Places:</b> Judah
<b>Verse:</b> 2:1-2 Gather together and pray, you shameless nation, while there is still time — before judgment begins, and your opportunity is blown away like chaff; before the fierce anger of the Lord falls and the terrible day of his wrath begins.

### God's Wrath is Coming:

- 1-2:3** **Look inside.** God will crush Judah in a terrifying sweep: all animals & people will be destroyed — idol worshipers, princes, greedy people, people who *used* to love God, people who never did; the alarm will sound, anguish & terror will come because the people are so sinful; Zephaniah warns Jerusalem to pray
- 2:4-3:1** **Look around.** Judah's neighbors (Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Ethiopia, Assyria [including Nineveh]) will be destroyed, too; Jerusalem is filthy, proud, violent & shameless; God has warned & punished enough; now he will destroy
- 3:9-20** **Look ahead.** The leftover people of Judah will turn back to God; he'll scatter their enemies, live with his people, & bless them; they will rejoice

*\*Zephaniah was prophesying during the reign of his cousin **Josiah** (one of Judah's few good kings — see II Kings 22-23 & II Chronicles 34-35). Maybe his prophecies helped spur Josiah's reforms.*

# Haggai

## Don't Forget the Temple

<b>Author:</b> Haggai
<b>Time:</b> 520 BC
<b>Place:</b> Jerusalem
<b>Verse:</b> 1:8 'Then go up into the mountains and bring down timber, and rebuild my Temple, and I will be pleased with it and appear there in my glory,' says the Lord.

### **Get to Work:** *5 short sermons that changed history*

- 1:1-11 **Rebuilding.** *August 520:* the people have been back in Jerusalem 14 years, & the project to rebuild the Temple is at a standstill; God tells Haggai to tell them it's wrong to live in luxury while God's house is in ruins; he is not blessing them, because they're not honoring him
- 1:12-15 **Result.** Zerubbabel & the people obey Haggai; they begin working — and worshipping; God says that he is with them & will bless them; *September:* they all gather & really kick in
- 2:1-9 **Reassurance.** *October:* God comes to say that the Temple may have been great before, but it will be even greater — God can do it; in the future it will be filled with glory
- 2:10-19 **Blessing.** *December:* God tells Haggai to point out that the people's past attitude poisoned their offerings, but now that they're rebuilding the Temple, he'll bless them richly
- 2:20-23 **More blessing.** *Same day:* God says that he will specially honor Zerubbabel

\***Zerubbabel** is the governor of Jerusalem (see Ezra 4:24-5:1).

\**These 5 sermonettes are the catalyst for rebuilding the Temple — a major event in Jewish history.*

# Zechariah

## Temple for the Messiah

<b>Author:</b> Zechariah (maybe added to later)
<b>Time:</b> Feb. 519-Dec. 518 (-maybe 470ish) BC
<b>Places:</b> Jerusalem
<b>Verse:</b> 8:9 The Lord of Hosts says, ‘Get on with the job and finish it! You have been listening long enough! For since you began laying the foundation of the Temple, the prophets have been telling you about the blessings that await you when it’s finished.’

### Visions, Messages, Prophecies:

- 1-6:8**     **Visions.** After a call to turn around, Zechariah sees 8 surreal visions that show that God will bless his people for restoring the Temple, help Zerubbabel their leader, give them a new start, punish their enemies, & banish wickedness
- 6:9-8**     **Messages.** God gives Zech 5 messages: true religion lies in serving God & people rather than rituals; he will forgive, & Jerusalem will be restored to glory; the Jews should spread his word to all nations
- 9-14**     **Prophecies.** Judah’s enemies will be destroyed; a Messiah will save the world; he will be rejected but will still save Judah; Jerusalem will be attacked again, but things will end & the Messiah will be king over the whole world

*\*Zechariah & Haggai lived & worked at the same time (see Ezra 5:1). This book is a kind of sequel to Haggai, which was about the physical & the present — Zechariah is interested in the spiritual & the future as well.*

*\*The New Testament quotes Zechariah a lot because of his specific Messianic prophecies:*

<i>Triumphal entry on donkey</i>	9:9	<i>Matt. 21:5/John 12:15</i>
<i>Betrayal for 30 silver coins</i>	11:12	<i>Matt. 27:9</i>
<i>Pierced hands</i>	12:10	<i>John 19:37</i>
<i>The "struck shepherd"</i>	11:7	<i>Matt. 26:31/Mark 14:27</i>
<i>The Second Coming</i>	14:9	<i>Rev. 11:15</i>

# Malachi

## They Still Don't Get It

<b>Author:</b> Malachi
<b>Time:</b> 425ish BC
<b>Place:</b> Jerusalem
<b>Verse:</b> 3:7 'Though you have scorned my laws from earliest time, yet you may still return to me,' says the Lord of Hosts. 'Come and I will forgive you.' But you say, 'We have never even gone away!'

### Dialog with a Rotten Nation:

- 1:1-5 **Love.** God has always cared for his people
- 1:6-2:9 **Rotten priests.** They allow dishonest offerings & they ruin people with false teaching
- 2:10-3 **Rotten people.** They divorce, & marry idolworshippers; they think wrong is right; he'll come himself to save them, but they don't want it; they rob him of offerings; even so, he'll spare the few who love him
- 4 **The end.** The 'Day of the Lord' is coming: rotten people will be blown away, but people who know him will live like never before

*\*Malachi was the last 'inspired' prophet for 400 years — that is, till **John the Baptist**, whom Malachi predicted in 3:1 & 4:5 (see Matt. 11:10). 3:1 is also a Messianic prophecy.*

Famous passage:

3:8 **Will a man rob God?**

1:2-3 **Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated**