

# Minor Prophets Part 2

## Lesson 1: Introduction

### 1. What is a prophet?

Definition of PROPHET (Hebrew):

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- A submitted person who, with a supernatural function on his own words, reveals what God is about to do in the Earth.
- The very definition of the word in the Hebrew carries the idea of humility.
- A true prophet only speaks while inspired by God. God's hand of blessing is upon the prophet, and He transfers the divine authority from which the prophet draws credibility to speak.
- Another meaning in the Hebrew signifies a call to bring people to remembrance or one calling people back to a particular junction in the road from where they first moved off course.

In the Old Testament, the prophet relentlessly admonished wandering Israel to return to their covenant with the Lord.

### 2. Two categories of prophets

There are two Hebrew words used to describe two different categories of prophets.

One word is used to describe a speaking prophet. They receive or hear words from the Lord, and they articulate them to their audience.

The second word describes prophets, or they were sometimes called "seers".

One category received words. The other saw images and visions. The prophetic end result was the same, but the manner in which the information was given was different.

Of course, we know that somebody can be used by God and receive both words and visions to communicate to a group of people.

Those who were called seers also had a supernatural ability to see into the spirit realm and observe things that could not be naturally known, such as the contents of a man's heart and invisible forces at work behind the scenes that cannot be discerned by everyone. They also saw future events.

### **3. The prophets of the Old Testament had prophetic insight and foresight.**

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The prophet had the ability to understand the root issues in situations and circumstances, including people's motivations, agendas, and plans.

They had keen vision to see into a matter, evaluate the problem, and understand it in depth. They had extraordinary insight to provide counsel and wisdom to bring about divinely inspired solutions.

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Prophets could see into the future. They saw things before they happened. This could be in the near or far future.

### **4. Four pictures of prophets**

There are four pictures about prophets that we can use for all time. All four of the following points are true of prophets of the Old Testament, early New Testament, current times and in days to come.

- The first picture – \_\_\_\_\_

This is the picture of the prophet who stays before the Lord and makes sure that his spirit is sensitive to hear the Lord's voice so that he can receive the message God intends for him to deliver.

A prophet's foremost occupation and function, before ever speaking to an audience of listeners, is to be before the Lord so he can prepare his spirit to hear what the Holy Spirit would say to him.

Of course, a prophet is dispatched to speak on behalf of God to a person or a specific group of people. But his first task is to linger in the God's presence to correctly understand the exact message that God wants him to give.

#### **Ezekiel 3:1-3**

Sometimes people do not understand that a prophet has spent much time in the presence of God. It may appear that a prophet just dramatically speaks of spontaneous message, but they do not understand the hours, weeks, months or even years that preceded that moment. Prophetic ministry is not as spontaneous as it appears to other people.

It is important for the prophet to spend time before God in his presence so that he has God's heart when he delivers the message. He is not just delivering words, but he accurately wants to capture the heart of God.

- The second picture – A prophet's public position to speak in front of others
- The third picture – \_\_\_\_\_

So far, we have seen that a prophet first spent substantial time before the Lord to get the message and the heart of God. Once a prophet heard the message God wants him to deliver, then he stands in front of those people to deliver the message.

He also realizes that he brings the message on behalf of God. He does not have the right to speak his own thoughts or views. He just speaks on behalf of the Lord to deliver an accurate message.

- The fourth picture – A prophet is one who has responsibility to foretell or speak in advance

The Old Testament prophets many times pointed to the future about the Messiah.

They also spoke about the rise and fall of kings, kingdoms, invading armies, economic blessings and times of hardship, and weather, including rain and drought.

## **2 Peter 1:21**

### **Acts 27:15**

The word "moved" in 1 Peter and the word "drive" in Acts are the same Greek word.

In Acts it describes an event when much needed wind blew into the sails of Paul ships to move it along.

An ancient ship was dependent upon the wind to carry it forward. If the wind stopped blowing, the ship became immobile. No wind meant no movement.

This illustration is used by Peter to explain how God moves upon his prophets. Without the movement of the Holy Spirit, it is impossible.

If the Spirit is not moving, and people are still attempting to prophecy, it becomes nothing. But as long as the Spirit of God is moving, the prophetic can operate.

The Old Testament prophets depended upon the wind of the Holy Spirit. The same should be true today. The real prophetic movement can only occur when the Holy Spirit is moving upon the sails.

# Minor Prophets Part 2

## Lesson 2: Nahum

### 1. Introduction to Nahum

- The theme of the book of Nahum is the destruction of Nineveh, the city Jonah warned.

After repenting at Jonah's message, the Assyrians fell even more deeply into the sin of idolatry.

God sent Nahum to declare His righteous judgment. Nahum prophesied about one hundred fifty years after Jonah preached to Ninevah.

Through His chastisement of Nineveh, we see God's judgment on the world. Mercy which remains unheeded will finally bring judgment.

The Book of Nahum has a theme of divine justice. The book emphasizes that oppressive nations will ultimately face judgment.

However, it is also a book of comfort for Judah. While Nineveh's doom is the judgment, the message is meant to comfort the people of Judah, who suffered under Assyrian cruelty.

This book is dedicated completely to the subject of judgment on Nineveh. This was about one hundred years after Jonah had prophesied against Ninevah and the city repented and was spared. Since that time, a new generation had risen and fell into sin.

Assyria was a nation that existed for war. The city of Ninevah served as the capital of Assyria.

Throughout the history of Assyria, the kings were excessively cruel. They only looked at other nations as places to be exploited and conquered.

One king was excessively cruel. His name was Ashurbanipal.

He forcibly tore the limbs off kings and forced captured rulers to drag his chariot through the streets. He forced another to commit suicide.

Nahum was called by God to prophecy against Ninevah. All his prophecies were fulfilled. The Medes and the Babylonians lay siege to the city.

The new generation had heard about the events of Jonah, so they tried the same thing and proclaimed a fast. But they were not fasting to Jehovah. Instead, they were fasting to their false gods. When the city fell it was plundered completely and reduced to a mound.

Nahum was on a mission to pronounce judgment on Ninevah. As is the case with the other prophets, he was speaking about his own time, but also about future events.

Nahum viewed Assyria as the kingdom of darkness, which must fall before the kingdom of God could be set up. The destruction of Nineveh must take place before the reign of the prince of peace. With this in mind, we read Nahum more clearly today.

Naheem lived during a time when Israel suffered at the hands of the Assyrians. Israel had a concentration on vengeance. They had more hatred for the enemy than they had for their own sins. This led them to a thinking that severe judgment was only reserved for Israel's enemies, and the blessing of God was only for them.

### **Nahum 1:1-3**

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As the ungodly flourish and destroy the innocent, there is comfort in the thought that God has promised to avenge the godly and innocent.

Nahum may have been from the area of Capernaum in Galilee. The city of Capernaum is said to have taken its name from Nahum. The name Capernaum (Kapher-Nahum) means "the village of Nahum."

### **2. The character of Nahum's God**

- God has great power. Sin angers Him.

### **Nahum 1:3-6**

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### **Nahum 1:3**

Nahum 1:7 shows us three characteristics of God.

### **Nahum 1:7**

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- God is a stronghold in the day of trouble.

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### **3. God's verdict on Ninevah, the capital of Assyria.**

- He condemned the city to total destruction.

**Nahum 1:8**

The overflowing of the Khusur River, which ran next to Ninevah, made the invasion and fall of the city possible.

There happened to be an ancient prophecy that Ninevah would fall to its enemies only after the river became an enemy. The Khusur River and a canal that ran through the city of Ninevah which flowed from the Tigris River overflowed. The constant rains and overflowing of the river caused damage to the city walls which enabled the enemy army to have easier access to the city.

**Nahum 2:6****Nahum 3:13**

The king of Ninevah, having knowledge of this prophecy, lost all hope and burned all of his concubines, eunuchs, and himself inside the palace.

The queen, Huzzab, did not burn with the others. She escaped the king, but was taken captive by the enemy.

**Nahum 2:7 – King James Version**

*And Huzzab shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up, and her maids . . .*

- Nahum prophesied that Nineveh would be captured while its defenders were drunk.

**Nahum 1:10**

- Its name would be blotted out completely and God would personally dig Ninevah's grave.

**Nahum 1:14, 15****4. Ninevah's fall**

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**Nahum 2:2-4**

The Medes and the Babylonians had armies that dyed their shields red. The soldiers wore red tunics. Their chariots were partially made of steel that would flash in the sun. The rapidly spinning wheels on the chariots would strike stones causing sparks that looked like lightning.

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**Nahum 2:13**

**5. The judgement upon Ninevah was the result of sin.**

**Nahum 3:1-7**

**Nahum 3:19**

**6. What do we learn from Nahum?**

- Just as Nineveh reaped what it sowed, so will nations and individuals also reap what they sow.

**Galatians 6:7**

- God is a stronghold in the time of trouble to the people who trust in Him.

**Nahum 1:7**

# Minor Prophets Part 2

## Lesson 3: Habakkuk

### 1. Introduction to Habakkuk

The Book of Habakkuk is unique among prophetic books.

Instead of addressing the people, Habakkuk mainly dialogues \_\_\_\_\_ about justice, suffering, and evil.

The book of Habakkuk begins by asking God questions.

The prophet does not doubt God's power and holiness, but he inquires why the heathen and Judah are permitted to continue in sin without the judgment of God falling on them.

Habakkuk was wrestling with the idea that God would permit all wicked people to inflict punishment. How could God use an unholy nation to execute judgment on his own people?

He was troubled with accepting that Israel was undergoing divine chastisement.

- Why do Judah's sins go unpunished?

### Habakkuk 1:2-4

- God tells Habakkuk that the Babylonians (Chaldeans) will be used as instruments of judgment.
- This troubles Habakkuk and he wonders – How can a righteous God use an even more wicked nation to punish Judah?

### Habakkuk 1:13

- The murdering Chaldeans oppressed the poor.

### Habakkuk 2:6, 7

- The Chaldeans worship idols and believed that their strength came from these false gods.

### Habakkuk 2:18, 19

## **2. Habakkuk waited on the Lord for the answer to his questions.**

Habakkuk was among the number of good people that remained in the nation. When he climbed the watchtower, God spoke to him. It is here where he found the solution to the problem of the power of the wicked versus the humiliation of those who believe in God

### **Habakkuk 2:1**

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He prepared his heart for God's rebuke.

## **3. God replied to Habakkuk.**

### **Habakkuk 2:2-4**

- God had already called the Chaldeans to be the instrument of Judah's punishment.

### **Habakkuk 1:5-7**

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### **Habakkuk 2:3**

- Be faithful. Mankind's faith must be in God, not in himself.

### **Habakkuk 2:4**

- God will triumph. Everyone shall behold His salvation.

### **Habakkuk 2:14**

### **Habakkuk 3:13**

## **4. Habakkuk praised God!**

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The last chapter of Habakkuk is a prayer of a man who has received a vision and has been changed. He saw no immediate deliverance, but he had God's promise.

### **Habakkuk 3:2**

- God's glory appeared in response to Habakkuk's prayer.

**Habakkuk 3:3, 4**

- Habakkuk praised the God during times when things were not going well. He learned to praise God in all times.

**Habakkuk 3:17-19**

This is the way Habakkuk ends – with a declaration of trust in God.

**5. What can we learn from Habakkuk?**

- When we pray, we are invited by God to bring questions, confusion, and grief.

It is okay not to have all the answers. We do not have to pretend that we know everything when we come to God.

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**Habakkuk 2:4**

This is the central message of the Book of Habakkuk. This is quoted throughout the New Testament.

**Romans 1:17****Galatians 3:11****Hebrews 10:38**

As Christians, we are not to live by sight or circumstances. We are to live our lives based on faith in God's Word.

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Habakkuk ends with one of the strongest statements of resilient faith.

**Habakkuk 3:17-19**

Christians can choose joy rooted not in circumstances, but in knowing God.



# Minor Prophets Part 2

## Lesson 4: Zephaniah

### 1. Introduction to Zephaniah

The ancestry of Zephaniah can be traced back four generations. Hizkiah, who is mentioned in Zephaniah's genealogy, is believed to be King Hezekiah.

His ministry took place during the reign of Josiah, which means that he more than likely knew Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Huldah (a female prophet).

Josiah brought about a great reform in Jerusalem and was a follower of the Lord. Zephaniah's ministry took place just before the reformation. He preached against apostasy, the worship of heavenly bodies, and the imitation of foreign customs, such as religion and dress.

The state of society was not good before the reform of Josiah. There were many foreign priests who followed Baal. The land was full of idolatry. There was child sacrifice.

Solomon's Temple was closed. The walls were decaying and it needed repair.

Many people followed Moloch and Jehovah. They did not see a difference between the two and felt that God was indifferent to what they did.

### **Zephaniah 1:12**

The all happened during the reign of Manasseh, about one thousand years after Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt.

His primary audience was the Kingdom of Judah, especially Jerusalem, though the message extends to surrounding nations.

Zephaniah wrote about the judgments of God. The "day of the Lord" is the key to this book. He used this phrase often.

### **Zephaniah 1:14, 15**

### **Zephaniah 1:17**

### **2. Zephaniah prophesied about a judgment against idolatry.**

### **Zephaniah 1:4, 5**

**3. Zephaniah prophesied that judgment would fall on those who turn their backs on the Lord.**

**Zephaniah 1:6**

**4. Zephaniah prophesied that judgment would fall on godless rulers.**

**Zephaniah 1:18**

**5. The day of the Lord will be the day of humanity's repentance.**

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**Zephaniah 2:1-3**

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**Zephaniah 3:8**

- The day of the Lord is the day of God's salvation.

**Zephaniah 3:20**

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**Zephaniah 3:17**

**6. The faithful remnant will be gathered from captivity.**

**Zephaniah 3:13**

**7. The heathen will be converted.**

**Galatians 3:8, 9**

**8. People everywhere shall worship God.**

**Ephesians 2:11-13**

**9. The day of restoration is coming.**

**Zephaniah 3:18, 19**

- On this day the church will be a purified people, without spot or wrinkle.

**Ephesians 5:27** *that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

- This day will result in a chastened people. They will be meek and purged of spiritual and natural pride.

**Zephaniah 3:11, 12**

- On that day of restoration, they will be a beloved people. They were redeemed with a price.

**I Corinthians 6:20**

- This is a day of praise among all people and nations. Israel will be a delight to both God and mankind.

**Zephaniah 3:20**

**10. What do we learn from Zephaniah?**

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Sin always has consequences. However, this is especially true when it is hidden or normalized.

It is good to regularly examine your life.

- Spiritual complacency is dangerous.

Do not allow yourself to slip into a routine faith.

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Identify idols that may be in your life.

You must intentionally put God first.

- Cultivate humility. When we are humble, God has mercy on us.

**Zephaniah 2:3**

Admit it when you have weakness. Remain teachable.



# Minor Prophets Part 2

## Lesson 5: Haggai

### 1. Introduction to Haggai

Haggai was the prophet to the people who returned the Jerusalem after seventy years of captivity in Babylon.

#### Haggai 2:3

Because of this verse, we can assume that Haggai was a youth who had seen the first temple. If so, this would make him an old man at the time of the completion of the second temple. It was seventy years after the first one was burnt.

#### Haggai 2:9

The rebuilding of the temple is the center of interest around Haggai's ministry. He and his junior colleague, Zachariah, worked together to further this great enterprise. Haggai had an interest in the building of the temple while Zachariah had visions that looked ahead to the first and second coming of the Messiah.

The Lord used Haggai to stir His people into giving to the work of His kingdom. The sacrificial response of the people broke the spirit of poverty and brought tremendous blessing. Today, humanity's problems are the same as those of ancient Israel. God's answers are also the same. The message of Haggai is still pertinent today.

Haggai teaches us to reorder priorities, trust God with small beginnings, obey despite discouragement, and believe that God is present when we put Him first.

Haggai's message was given after Israel returned from its Babylonian captivity around 520 BC, during the reign of King Darius I of Persia.

#### Haggai 1:1, 2

**2. Cyrus, the King of Persia, had given permission for the Jews to return to Jerusalem some years before.**

#### Ezra 1:1-3

**3. The people of Israel had not fulfilled the commission to rebuild the temple.**

Nehemiah led the rebuilding of the walls around Jerusalem. Ezra had laid the foundation of the temple. The work came to a halt for about sixteen years. People became more concerned about building their own homes than the house of the Lord.

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### Haggai 1:1-5

- Because of their selfishness and disregard for the Lord's Temple, the people had sown much but reaped only a little. They were putting money in a bag with holes.

The nation had become more interested in its comfort than its divine commission. Rebuilding the temple had taken second place in their lives.

The nation's lack of concern for the temple caused a lack of blessing. Their refusal to donate to the work resulted in their own poverty.

Haggai taught that economic hardship was linked to spiritual neglect, explaining that drought and poor harvests resulted from ignoring God's house.

### Haggai 1:5-11

A central phrase in his preaching is "consider your ways", calling the people to reflect on their misplaced priorities.

#### 4. The people hear Haggai's message, repent, and obey God.

### Haggai 1:12-14

Haggai directly addressed key leaders such as Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah and Joshua, the high priest.

#### 5. The people responded to God and He responded to them.

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### Haggai 2:1-3

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### Haggai 2:4

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### Haggai 2:5

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### Haggai 2:6, 7

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### **Haggai 2:8**

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### **Haggai 2:9**

**6. Haggai reenforces that the poverty of the people was a result of their disobedience to give to His work and obey His command to rebuild the temple.**

### **Haggai 2:15-17**

- Abundance came when the people began to give to God.

### **Haggai 2:18, 19**

### **7. What can we learn from Haggai?**

- When comfort and personal success come before God's purposes, spiritual decline follows.

Examine where your time, money, and energy go, and whether God truly comes first.

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The people experienced economic frustration – little harvest, financial strain, dissatisfaction. God linked this directly to neglecting Him.

- Obedience invites God's presence,

When the people obeyed and resumed rebuilding, God said, "I am with you" (Hag. 1:13).

### **Haggai 1:13**

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God repeated the command: "Be strong... and work"

### **Haggai 2:4**

God supplies strength when His people commit to His work.

Reaping the harvest and working for God may feel tiring, but God empowers those who stay faithful.

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Haggai affirmed Zerubbabel, calling him God's "signet ring".

### **Haggai 2:23**

God values leaders who act in obedience despite pressure.

Integrity and faithfulness matter more than status or recognition.

- God's work is ultimately about His glory.

The temple represented God's presence among His people.

True fulfillment comes when our lives align with God's purposes.

# Minor Prophets Part 2

## Lesson 6: Zechariah

### 1. Introduction to Zechariah

The people of Judah were taken into captivity because of their disobedience to God. When they returned from Babylon, they began to rebuild the temple. Soon they became discouraged and stopped the work. Sixteen years later, they resumed rebuilding under the inspiration and guidance of Zechariah and Haggai.

The book of Zechariah begins with the challenge of restoring the temple. Then the prophet touches on the spiritual life of the nation, and prophetic events concerning the Messiah.

The book encourages Israel to complete the temple, remain faithful to God, and look forward to future restoration.

Zechariah has 14 chapters, often divided into two main sections:

- Chapters 1–8: visions and immediate encouragement
- Chapters 9–14: future prophecy and Messianic themes

Zechariah includes some of the clearest Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. For example, the humble king on a donkey.

### **Zechariah 9:9**

Zechariah is frequently quoted in the New Testament including many things about Jesus's life.

The book of Zechariah has an apocalyptic style using imagery and symbols making it one of the most complex prophetic books to interpret.

### 2. Zechariah's ten visions regarding Jerusalem.

Zechariah received ten visions concerning Jerusalem. All the visions unifying thoughts.

- The Lord is jealous with great jealousy for Jerusalem.
- He was displeased with the nations that helped afflict Israel.
- The Lord would return to Jerusalem with mercy. His temple would be built there.

The temple was needed to serve as a regular place of worship for the community.

In its function as the supreme place of prayer, repentance, and atonement, it would help the people not to fall into spiritual laziness.

Each vision had a specific meaning which tied into the general theme. God is jealous over Jerusalem, and the nations will be punished for abusing His covenant people.

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The men riding the horses are angels who are scouts. God sends them on various missions to report the state of things to Him.

The horses are not symbolic. They are actual “spirit horses”. We see them appear in other places in the Bible such as when Elijah was caught up into heaven.

### **Zechariah 1:7–17**

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The four horns represent the four great empires which scattered Israel: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

### **Zechariah 1:18, 19**

- The four craftsmen

The four craftsmen symbolize the four instruments of judgment used on the four empires.

### **Zechariah 1:20, 21**

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The man with the measuring line bears the message that Jerusalem is to be expanded under the reign of the Messiah. It also shows that the Lord Himself shall be the wall of fire around the glorious city.

### **Zechariah 2:1–13**

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Joshua as high priest represents Jerusalem or the elect people. His clothes are dirty because of the sin of the people. God cleanses him of his sin and changes his garments.

The great High Priest is coming soon – the Messiah, referred to as the coming Branch.

This also speaks of the sinner coming to Christ and being cleansed of all sin.

**Zechariah 3:1–10**

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The golden lampstand and two olive trees demonstrate that the Lord will rebuild His temple and demonstrate the power of His Spirit.

The golden lampstand symbolizes the presence of God and power of the Holy Spirit. God's work is accomplished "not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit."

The two olive trees symbolize God's anointed leaders who were leading the building of the temple – the priest, Joshua, and the governor, Zerubbabel. However, like other prophecies, it also refers to the two witnesses in Revelation.

**Zechariah 4:1–14**

- The flying scroll

The flying scroll is the Word of God. It represents the Word which goes out into the world to judge it.

**Zechariah 5:1–4**

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The basket, or ephah, was used as a measuring container. It is a symbol of trade. The woman in the basket represents corruption and wickedness. She is carried back to Babylon.

God is removing wickedness from the land.

**Zechariah 5:5–11**

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The four chariots reveal the judgment of the Lord on the nations.

**Zechariah 6:1–8**

- The crowning of Joshua

The symbolic crowning of Joshua is a vision of the second coming of Christ. It is a prophetic picture of the Messiah both King and Priest.

**Zechariah 6:9–15**

### 3. Messianic prophecies

Zechariah gives more specific predictions about the coming of Jesus Christ than any other prophetic book in the Old Testament except Isaiah.

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**Zechariah 3:8**

**Matthew 12:18**

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**Zechariah 9:16**

**John 10:11**

- The Messiah would be the smitten Shepherd.

**Zechariah 13:7**

**Matthew 26:31**

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**Zechariah 9:9**

**Matthew 21:4, 5**

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**Zechariah 11:12, 13**

**Matthew 27:9, 10**

- He would be wounded in the house of His friends.

**Zechariah 13:6**

**Matthew 26:21-23**

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**Zechariah 12:10**

**John 19:34**

**John 19:37**

- Christ will return on the Mount of Olives.

**Zechariah 14:3, 4****4. What can we learn from Zechariah?**

- God calls for repentance before restoration.

**Zechariah 1:3**      *Therefore say to them, "Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Return to Me," says the LORD of hosts, "and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts.*

Lasting change in our lives begins with honest repentance and restored relationship with God.

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**Zechariah 4:6**

Success in spiritual life comes from reliance on God, not talent, position, or effort alone.

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**Zechariah 3:4**

Your past does not disqualify you from serving God when you receive His forgiveness.

- God values holiness in everyday life.

**Zechariah 14:20, 21**

Speaking to believers who are active in the ministry – Everything in your life should be sacred, not just ministry work.

Our daily work, relationships, and decisions should honor God.

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Many of the Old Testament prophets were rejected by the people. God's chosen servant may be rejected, yet God's plan still succeeds.

Faithfulness to God matters more than human approval.



# Minor Prophets Part 2

## Lesson 7: Malachi

### 1. Introduction to Malachi

Malachi's message is one of God's love and the restoration of His people. He bluntly reveals their sin in language they understand.

God is broken-hearted over Israel's carelessness. They are callused, ungrateful, and unable to see that God's love is of any special advantage. Still, God desired for the people to restore their relationship with Him.

#### Malachi 3:7

Not much is known about Malachi personally. Malachi means \_\_\_\_\_

Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. It was written after the Babylonian exile during the last years of Nehemiah's governorship of Jerusalem.

Unlike some of the other prophets we have studied, it was written after the temple had been rebuilt. Worship was happening again, but it had become careless and half-hearted – which Malachi strongly calls out.

Malachi was bold in confronting the sins of the priesthood and the evil of his time. People were absorbed in material things and had forgotten their obligation to God.

The Jewish people thought when they returned to their land that they would have an immediate blessing. Instead, they had famine and poor crops. The disappointment of the people can be found in Malachi 3:14, 15.

#### Malachi 3:14, 15

After Malachi, there are four hundred years of silence.

The book is structured like a debate.

- God makes a claim.
- The people respond with a question.
- God responds.

Humans are strange. People will stubbornly insist on having their own way and yet think God is still going to bless them anyway. When they are chastised instead of blessed, it causes surprise and bewilderment. People cannot see that they are at fault. They feel that God has been unfair with them. Then, when the locust come and destroy the crops, the people say it is vain to serve God.

This is when Malachi appeared on the scene. Pointed out the inconsistencies of their conduct and their irreverence toward God.

However, he began his message from the Lord telling the people that God loved them. The people then asked, "He loves us? Look at what the locusts have eaten. How could God love us and allow all these bad things to happen?"

## **2. The sins of the people and priests.**

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### **Malachi 1:6**

- They offered corrupt animals as sacrifices to God.

### **Malachi 1:7**

One of the reasons the people were not blessed, began with their offerings to God. They offered lame and blind animals to Him for sacrifice and kept the best ones for themselves.

- The priests refused to work for the Lord unless they were paid.

### **Malachi 1:10**

The temple priests would only work for money. They would shut the temple doors if they were not getting paid for every little thing they did. The Lord declared that instead of leading the people to truth, the priests had caused many to stumble.

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### **Malachi 3:8-10**

- Men divorced their wives to marry heathen women.

### **Malachi 2:11**

### **Malachi 2:14, 15**

### 3. They dishonored God.

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#### Malachi 1:2

- They justified their wickedness by claiming that they had served God in vain.

#### Malachi 3:14, 15

### 4. Malachi brought a message of repentance and restoration.

#### Malachi 3:7

When a person takes the first step to repentance, God has already made a hundred steps toward him. Listen to the voice of His Holy Spirit as He pleads with you to make a move.

### 5. There is a bridge in Malachi from the Old Testament to the New Testament with a prophecy about John the Baptist and Jesus.

#### Malachi 3:1, 2

### 6. What can we learn from Malachi?

- God cares about the heart, not just the ritual.

Israel was going through the motions—worshiping, sacrificing, showing up—but their hearts were not fully given over to God.

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The people offered God leftovers—blemished sacrifices they wouldn't dare give a human leader.

What gets our best energy—work, hobbies, screens—and what gets the scraps?  
Malachi challenges us to bring excellence into what we offer God.

- Leadership and influence come with responsibility.

The priests failed by teaching poorly and living inconsistently.

Your integrity matters. People do not just listen to what we say, they watch how we live.

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Malachi speaks strongly about broken promises—especially in marriage and giving.

- Generosity is a trust issue, not a money issue.

What we do with our resources reveals what we rely on. Generosity trains our hearts to trust God rather than grip tightly.

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Real change usually begins with small, honest steps back toward God: realignment, humility, and openness.