

# THE 12 MINOR PROPHETS

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## GOD STATEMENT FOR THE MINOR PROPHETS: THE GOD WHO KEEPS

\_\_\_\_\_ (a)

First things first—there’s nothing “minor” about these twelve prophetic books. In the Hebrew Bible, these aren’t twelve books, but rather a single book which is divided into \_\_\_\_\_ (b) parts. Let’s summarize the work of each.

### AMOS (Preached to the Northern Kingdom in the 700s BC)

Of these twelve prophets, five did their work during the eighth century (the 700s BC). In the general order of their appearance, they were Amos, Hosea, Jonah, and Micah. Amos and Hosea both preached to the Northern Kingdom before it fell in 722 BC, Jonah was an “\_\_\_\_\_ (c) prophet” who preached to the \_\_\_\_\_ (d), and Micah preached to the \_\_\_\_\_ (e) Kingdom.

When Amos arrived on the scene, those at the bottom of the social ladder (i.e., the \_\_\_\_\_ (f)) in the Northern Kingdom were being crushed by the wealthy who were living in relative comfort and security (Amos 4:1; 5:12). Though the people profess to follow God and offer sacrifices to Him, their \_\_\_\_\_ (g) is evident in their greed, idolatry, and immorality (Amos 5:21-27). Consequently, Amos warned Israel that God would expel them from their homeland (Amos 7:10-13).

### HOSEA (Preached to the Northern Kingdom in the 700s BC)

Hosea came along just a few years after Amos and compared Israel’s spiritual condition to his own troubled \_\_\_\_\_ (h). Hosea had married a prostitute named Gomer, who bore him a child, then turned to adultery and had two more children by other lovers. Eventually she left Hosea, only to end up in slavery. When Hosea heard about her plight, he bought her and brought her back to his house. He wanted her home forever.

This illustrates how Israel treated God. Israel was like the \_\_\_\_\_ (i) wife as she played the \_\_\_\_\_ (j) with pagan religions. Yet God

still wanted Israel back and was determined to bring her home. His love for His people was deep and undying.

### **MICAH (Preached to the Southern Kingdom in the 700s)**

Micah joined his contemporaries Amos and Hosea in their protest against the Northern Kingdom and its wickedness. But Micah's greater concern was \_\_\_\_\_(k), the capital of the Southern Kingdom. He saw Judah (the Southern Kingdom) headed down the same path that Samaria (the capital of the Northern Kingdom) had taken. Micah cautioned that God was no more hesitant to \_\_\_\_\_(l) Jerusalem than He was to punish Samaria (Micah 3:12).

Yet in the midst of his warnings, Micah held out a word of hope for Jerusalem that no prophet extended to Samaria. Micah foresaw a distant time when the city would rise from the ashes of destruction to be great and glorious once more (Micah 4:1-8).

### **JONAH (Preached to Nineveh, capital of Assyria, in the 700s BC)**

The book of Jonah is unusual because it's the only Old Testament book whose exclusive message is to a \_\_\_\_\_(m) nation. That nation is Israel's enemy, the Assyrians, and Jonah is sent to preach repentance in their capital city, Nineveh. God's judgement was hanging over Nineveh because of their wickedness. Jonah, however, had no interest in helping the city avert God's \_\_\_\_\_(n).

But finally he went to Nineveh and the response was unprecedented. The entire city, from the king on down, began to seek God's favor and pledged to live \_\_\_\_\_(o) lives. As a result, God withdrew His judgment and spared the city. This is a dramatic example of God ruling over nations outside Israel.

### **NAHUM (Preached to Jerusalem and Nineveh in the 600s BC)**

Unfortunately, the \_\_\_\_\_(p) of Nineveh didn't last. The Assyrians were soon back to their cruel and vicious ways. Assyria went back to her conquering ways and subjected their captives to gruesome torture and treatment. As their \_\_\_\_\_(q) stacked up, God revoked His previous stay of execution against Nineveh. In the mid-600s BC He pronounced a new death warrant on Assyria. This time the prophet was Nahum.

Unlike in the days of Jonah, when it was possible to turn back to God and escape His judgment, Nahum offered Nineveh no \_\_\_\_\_(r).

God's decision was final, and this time He would not reverse Himself. The end of Assyria would come within 50 years.

### **ZEPHANIAH (Preached to the Southern kingdom in the 600s)**

By now the Assyrians had destroyed the Northern Kingdom. Zephaniah now warned \_\_\_\_\_(s) that her own iniquity was inviting the same judgment on themselves. He described that judgement as “the \_\_\_\_\_(t) of the Lord” (Zeph 1:14-18). In fact, he used that expression twenty-three times in his three chapters.

There was \_\_\_\_\_(u), however, for those who sought the Lord with humility, who kept His laws, and tried to do what was right. God would purify them once His punishment of Jerusalem ran its course. Zephaniah called them “a \_\_\_\_\_(v),” like a tiny piece of fabric left from a garment. From within this remnant God would eventually restore the fortunes of Jerusalem (Zeph 3:12-17).

### **HABAKKUK (Preached to the Southern Kingdom in the 600s)**

Habakkuk and Zephaniah were roughly contemporaries (Zephaniah was slightly before Habakkuk). When Habakkuk began prophesying, the kingdom of Judah was only about \_\_\_\_\_(w) years from being destroyed by the \_\_\_\_\_(x). Habakkuk had a problem with understanding why God was allowing the wickedness to go unpunished. God's answer was that He was preparing to send the Babylonians to crush Jerusalem for her wrongdoing. That answer created a bigger problem for Habakkuk: how could God punish Judah through a nation even more \_\_\_\_\_(y) than Judah. God assured Habakkuk that He would repay Babylon for their wickedness too (after He uses them to punish Jerusalem). God concludes His answer to Habakkuk with a statement affirming His sovereign majesty: “The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silent before Him” (Hab 2:20).

After questioning God, Habakkuk concludes with a song of praise. The thought of judgment coming from an evil nation terrifies him, but he resolves to \_\_\_\_\_(z) God completely no matter what happened.

### **JOEL (Preached to the Southern Kingdom around 800 BC)**

Because there are no specific datable events recorded in the book of Joel, it's difficult to determine when he prophesied. Joel seized upon the occasion of a great \_\_\_\_\_(aa) disaster in Israel—an invading \_\_\_\_\_(bb) plague—to warn of another invasion that was coming to devour Jerusalem. Joel explains that these locusts were a symbol of what would happen when the Babylonian army came against

Jerusalem. In view of that, Joel calls for \_\_\_\_\_(cc) and repentance. Only by total \_\_\_\_\_(dd) to the one true God could they escape the coming “day of the Lord” (Joel 2:12-13). For those who repent, it is promised that the \_\_\_\_\_(ee) of God would be poured out upon them (Joel 2:28-32)—a promise of hope that is ultimately fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost when the church is born (Acts 2:16-21).

### **OBADIAH (Preached to Edom in the 800s BC)**

Obadiah is the \_\_\_\_\_(ff) book in the Old Testament—one chapter long—and it may be the earliest prophetic book. Like Jonah, Obadiah is an “international prophet” because God sent him to preach judgment against a nation other than Israel. That nation is \_\_\_\_\_(gg), cousins of Israel—they were descendants of Esau, Jacob’s brother—who lived in the desert regions south of the Dead Sea.

Obadiah is an example of God’s response to anyone who would harm His \_\_\_\_\_(hh) people. Not only are the people of Edom filled with pride and self-confidence, but when Jerusalem is attacked by foreign enemies, the Edomites don’t come to Jerusalem’s aid. Instead, they give aid to Israel’s enemies. Consequently, God will bring Edom down and restore His people to a place of prominence.

### **HAGGAI (Preached to those who had returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile in the 500s BC)**

Haggai is one of three prophets preaching to the Jewish people who had returned from \_\_\_\_\_(ii) (the other two are Zechariah and Malachi). After the people returned to Jerusalem and began rebuilding the \_\_\_\_\_(jj), they became indifferent to the project because they were discouraged by the opposition of their neighbors. So, they poured their energy into rebuilding their own homes and fortunes. They were more concerned with their own \_\_\_\_\_(kk) than \_\_\_\_\_(ll).

Haggai pointed out their misplaced \_\_\_\_\_(mm) and called attention to their recent economic hardships. These reversals of fortune, he said, were God’s way of showing His displeasure with them. The people responded and “obeyed the voice of the Lord” and began working on the Temple again. This wasn’t enough to satisfy Haggai, however. He also pressed them to pursue personal \_\_\_\_\_(nn). They couldn’t buy God’s favor by simply rebuilding His house. God wanted their total devotion.

### **ZECHARIAH (Preached to those who had returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile in the 500s BC)**

Like Ezekiel and Daniel, Zechariah saw \_\_\_\_\_(oo) that were God's way of relaying a message to him. There are eight graphic visions shown to Zechariah to encourage the remnant while they rebuilt the Temple. The theme of these eight visions is "\_\_\_\_\_(pp)"—assurance that Israel will be restored in prosperity, that God will punish their oppressors and that He will be among His returning people, and that the sins of the people will be removed by one called "the Branch."

The last six chapters of Zechariah are written sometime after the completion of the Temple in anticipation of Israel's coming \_\_\_\_\_(qq). This book is second only to Isaiah in the volume of material about the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **MALACHI (Preached to those who had returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile in the 400s BC)**

The final Old Testament prophet is Malachi. He preached about 80 years after Haggai and Zechariah, and he leveled charges against the priests. Consumed by \_\_\_\_\_(rr), the priests were offering only diseased and imperfect animals on the altar and keeping the best for themselves. And the \_\_\_\_\_(ss) were as bad as the priests. They were finding clever ways to avoid their duties to God. Particularly disturbing was the casual way in which men were \_\_\_\_\_(tt) their wives to marry foreign women. Also, they were robbing God of the tithes and offerings due Him, and in arrogance they challenged God's character.

Because of such behavior, Malachi announced that God cared nothing for their festivals, sacrifices, and prayers. He was ignoring them all. To be true to Him, they had to be \_\_\_\_\_(uu) to one another and obey the terms of the \_\_\_\_\_(vv) from their \_\_\_\_\_(ww). Only then would they be fit for God's holy kingdom that will come when the Messiah comes.

### **LESSONS FROM THE MINOR PROPHETS**

- (From Amos) God cares about the \_\_\_\_\_(xx) and those in need, and so should we. The genuine care for others is part of God's covenant.
- (From Hosea) God \_\_\_\_\_(yy) us and wants to have a relationship with us no matter what we've done.
- (From Micah) There is an inherent relationship between true spirituality and social \_\_\_\_\_(zz). Or, as James describes

it in the New Testament, the relationship between \_\_\_\_\_(aaa) and \_\_\_\_\_(bbb).

- (From Jonah) If God loved \_\_\_\_\_(ccc), He loves you.
- (From Nahum) God is not \_\_\_\_\_(ddd) of any power or people. He is in control of all events and is able to \_\_\_\_\_(eee) and provide for His people.
- (From Zephaniah) Don't let material \_\_\_\_\_(fff) become a barrier to your total \_\_\_\_\_(ggg) to God.
- (From Habakkuk) Keep \_\_\_\_\_(hhh) God even when life seems \_\_\_\_\_(iii) or incomprehensible.
- (From Joel) If you don't pay attention to the \_\_\_\_\_(jjj) of the Lord now, you will face the " \_\_\_\_\_(kkk) of the Lord" later.
- (From Obadiah) God's \_\_\_\_\_(lll) will ultimately fall on those who are against His \_\_\_\_\_(mmm).
- (From Haggai) Constantly be reviewing your \_\_\_\_\_(nnn) to make sure they're in line with God's.
- (From Zechariah) God's message of the coming \_\_\_\_\_(ooo) should motivate your \_\_\_\_\_(ppp) and inspire your future.
- (From Malachi) \_\_\_\_\_(qqq) and disobedience will block God's \_\_\_\_\_(rrr).

## KEY PASSAGES FROM THE MINOR PROPHETS

- Amos 5:21-23
- Hosea 2:19-20
- Micah 5:2-4
- Jonah 4:1-2, 9-11
- Nahum 1:1-7
- Zephaniah 3:12-20
- Habakkuk 2:20; 3:17-18
- Joel 2:28-32
- Obadiah 1:1-4
- Haggai 1:2-10
- Zechariah 9:9
- Malachi 3:10

## FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ANSWER KEY

[a] PROMISES	[ss] people
[b] twelve	[tt] divorcing
[c] international	[uu] true
[d] Assyrians	[vv] covenant
[e] Southern	[ww] heart
[f] poor	[xx] poor
[g] hypocrisy	[yy] loves
[h] marriage	[zz] ethics
[i] unfaithful	[aaa] faith
[j] prostitute	[bbb] works
[k] Jerusalem	[ccc] Assyrians
[l] punish	[ddd] afraid
[m] Gentile	[eee] protect
[n] judgment	[fff] comfort
[o] upright	[ggg] commitment
[p] reforms	[hhh] trusting
[q] atrocities	[iii] impossible
[r] hope	[jjj] Word
[s] Jerusalem	[kkk] day
[t] day	[lll] judgment
[u] hope	[mmm] people
[v] remnant	[nnn] priorities
[w] 20	[ooo] Messiah
[x] Babylonians	[ppp] present
[y] wicked	[qqq] Compromise
[z] trust	[rrr] blessings
[aa] natural	
[bb] locust	
[cc] humility	
[dd] devotion	
[ee] Spirit	
[ff] shortest	
[gg] Edom	
[hh] chosen	
[ii] exile	
[jj] Temple	
[kk] comfort	
[ll] worship	
[mm] priorities	
[nn] purity	
[oo] visions	
[pp] assurance	
[qq] Messiah	
[rr] greed	

