

# INTRODUCTION

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What do you think about when you think of a prophet?

If you were to pick percentages, how much written was past, present, future?<sup>1</sup>

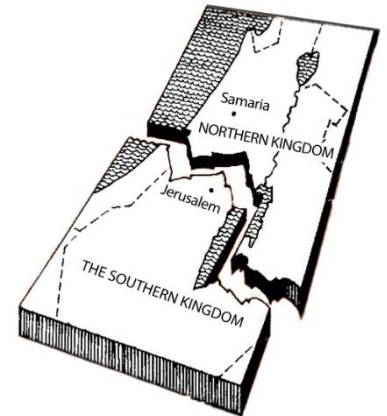


Be honest. When did you last read a book like Obadiah? Or Joel? (lent readings) Or perhaps the better question is "Have you ever read Obadiah?" or "Where do I find Haggai"?

James Montgomery Boice comments on how the Minor Prophets dramatize the character of God as few other books do: "They highlight God's sovereignty ... holiness ... [and] love .... In the Minor Prophets, we will hear the voice of God speaking to us in a fresh way ... as individuals and as a spiritual fellowship in the Church."

Natural disasters, prostitutes, social injustices, spiritual poverty, corrupt kings, famine, sword and Leviathan – they're all here.

Take some time to take out your bibles and physically see where they are in the book, read some, consider where they fit in the timeframe and which kingdom period (north Israel, south Judah, Assyria, Edom, pre-exile/post exile). Look them up in the index at the front. They are referred to as 'the Twelve Prophets' as a unit of books, but now most often referred to as 'the Minor Prophets'. They did not work collaboratively and we have no biographical hints on Obadiah and Malachi, although consider:



Hosea 1:1–9; 3:1–3

Joel 1:1

Amos 1:1; 7:14, 15

Jonah 1:1–12 (see 2 Kings 14:25); 2:1; 3:3, 4; 4:1–10

Micah 1:1; (see Jeremiah 26:17–19)

Nahum 1:1.

Habakkuk 1:1; 2:1; 3:16–19

Zephaniah 1:1

Haggai 1:1 (see Ezra 5:1; 6:14)

Zechariah 1:1 (see Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Nehemiah 12:4, 16); 2:4<sup>2</sup>

Notes:

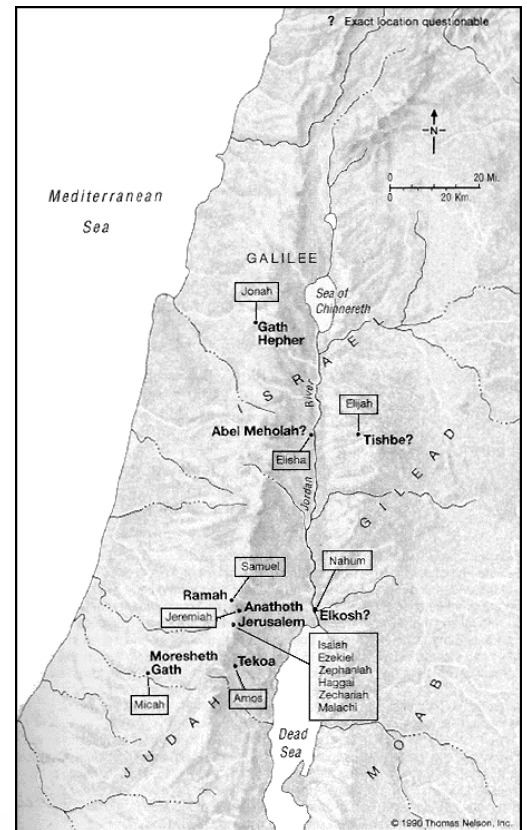
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<sup>1</sup> Chisolm, R 1993. The majority of their sermons dealt with the present and the past. Very little revelation was given about the future. They were more concerned with the past and present failings of the nation in their relationships to God and man.

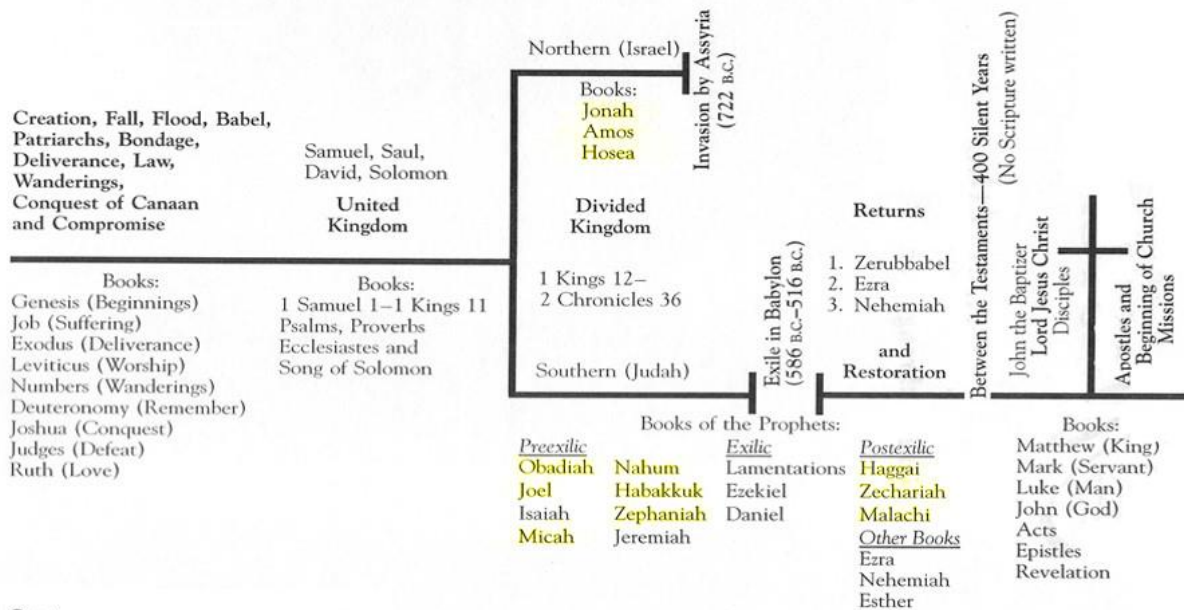
<sup>2</sup> Hayford, J. W., & Snider, J. (1995). [\*Twelve Voices for Truth: Confronting a Falling World with Hope: a Study of the Minor Prophets\*](#). Thomas Nelson.

**Timeline:**

- Obadiah** (in the reign of Joram, king of Judah)—between 889 and 884 BC
- Joel** (in the reign of Joash of Judah)—between 875 and 848
- Jonah** (in the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel)—between 824 and 783
- Amos** (in the reigns of Jeroboam II of Israel and Uzziah of Judah)—between 810 and 783
- Hosea** (in the reigns of Jeroboam II of Israel and Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah)—between 790 and 725
- Micah** (in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah)—between 758 and 710
- Nahum** (in the reign of Hezekiah of Judah)—between 710 and 699
- Habakkuk** (in the reign of Manasseh or Josiah of Judah)—between 650 and 628
- Zephaniah** (in the reign of Josiah of Judah)—between 628 and 623
- Haggai** (in the reign of Darius of Persia)—in 520
- Zechariah** (in the reign of Darius of Persia)—between 520 and 480
- Malachi** (in the reign of Artaxerxes of Persia)—between 433 and 424<sup>4</sup>



## SURVEY CHART OF THE BIBLE BOOKS



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So, by way of introduction, how are you wanting God to speak to you from these Prophets?

Their message, though ancient, was one for which they died. Their **primary function** was to call people to radical obedience and dependence upon God. What might that look like today for you? Read their story with fresh eyes and ears, listening again to the voice of God.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Keil and Delitzsch, 3.

