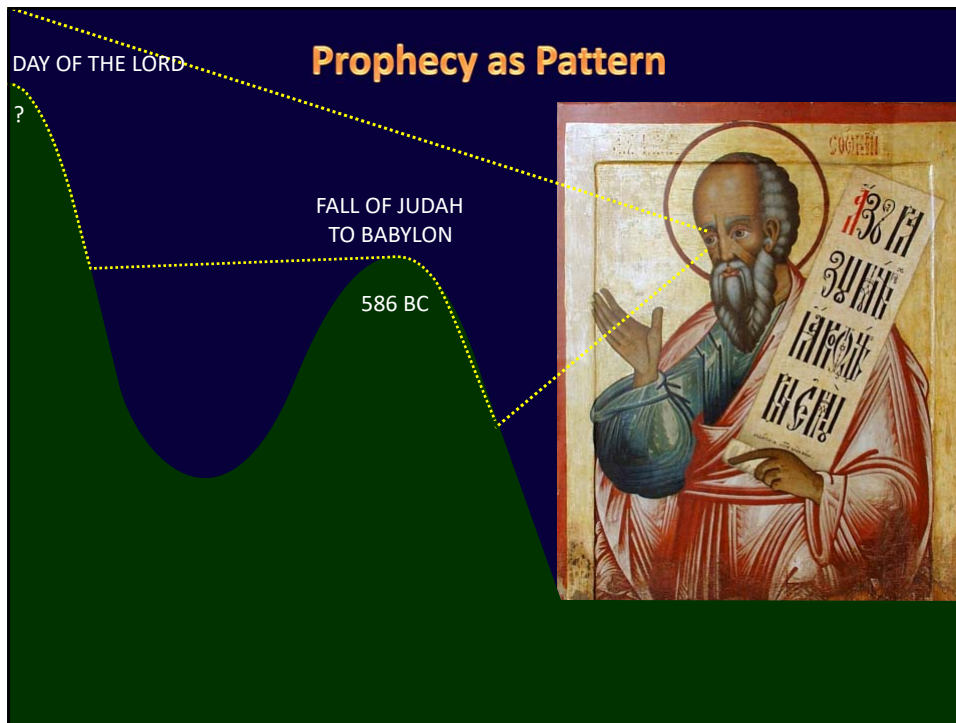


Zephaniah

- Prophecy had been silent for over 50 years since Hezekiah died (around 686 BC).
- Now (635-625 BC) Hezekiah's great-great grandson is commissioned to speak for God.
- ★ This is the **most prophetic book** in the Bible. 47 of 53 verses (89%) speak of 20 predictions, about half of the fall of Judah in 586 BC.
- The rest revolve around the Day of the Lord, which is yet to come.



Timeline of the Prophets

950		900		850		800		750		700		650		600		550		500		450		400	
Egypt				Assyria								Babylon				Persia							
N & S Kingdoms				Judah alone								Exile				Post-exile							
▲ Solomon dies				▲ Israel falls								▲ Judah falls				▲ 1 st captives return							
Major Prophets				Isaiah								Jeremiah/Lam. Daniel Ezekiel											
Minor Prophets				Obadiah Joel		Jonah Amos Hosea		Micah		Nahum Zephaniah Habakkuk				Haggai Zechariah				Malachi					
Other Prophets and OT Books				Elijah Elisha								Esther Ezra Nehemiah											

The book of Zephaniah

- Zephaniah 1:1 identifies the author of the Book of Zephaniah as the Prophet Zephaniah. The name Zephaniah means “the Lord hides” (i.e. protects), “Jehovah has concealed (or treasured)”, “Jehovah of darkness”, or “The Lord is my secret”.
- The book of Zephaniah was written during the reign of King Josiah (640-609 BC), likely early in his reign.
- His contemporaries include Nahum, Habakkuk and Jeremiah.
- Zephaniah's message of judgment and encouragement contains three major doctrines:
 1. God is sovereign over all nations.
 2. The wicked will be punished and the righteous will be vindicated on the day of judgment (day of the Lord).
 3. God blesses those who repent and trust in Him.

Zephaniah

- Born in the latter reign of Manasseh, Zephaniah was a great-great-grandson of Hezekiah (715-686 BC), and, thus, of royal blood. His name means, "whom the Lord hides (or protects)."
- Whilst a contemporary of Habakkuk, his focus (like Joel's) is more distant, on the Day of the Lord.
- There are tantalizing hints in this tiny but remarkable book:
 - On the Day of the Lord, God will judge the nations and usher in His righteous kingdom.
 - In the end times, when Israel is regathered in the land, there would be a return to pure Hebrew;
 - that Ethiopia would ultimately bring the Messiah a special gift on Mt. Zion; and
 - even a hint of the Rapture.

Key Verses in Zephaniah

"Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath. In the fire of his jealousy the whole world will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live in the earth."

(Zephaniah 1:18)

"Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the LORD's anger." (Zephaniah 2:3)

"The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." (Zephaniah 3:17)

Summary of Zephaniah

Zephaniah pronounces the Lord's judgment on the earth, Judah, on surrounding nations, Jerusalem and all nations. This is followed by proclamations of the Lord's blessing on all nations and especially on the faithful remnant of His people in Judah.

Zephaniah had the courage to speak bluntly because he knew he was proclaiming the Word of the Lord. His book begins with "The word of the Lord" and ends with "says the Lord."

He knew that neither the many idols the people worshiped nor even the might of the Assyrian army could save them. God is gracious and compassionate, but when all His warnings are ignored, judgment is to be expected.

God's day of judgment is frequently mentioned in the Scriptures. The prophets called it the "Day of the Lord." They refer to events such as the fall of Jerusalem as manifestations of God's Day, each of which pointed toward the ultimate Day of the Lord.

Foreshadowing

The final blessings on Zion pronounced in 3:14-20 are largely unfulfilled, leading us to conclude that these are messianic prophecies that await the Second Coming of Christ to be completed. The Lord has taken away our punishment only through Christ who came to die for the sins of His people (Zephaniah 3:15; John 3:16). But Israel has not yet recognized her true Savior. This is yet to happen (Romans 11:25-27).

Zephaniah parallels the book of Revelation, which quotes it.

The promise of peace and safety for Israel, a time when their King is in their midst, will be fulfilled when Christ returns to judge the world and redeem it for Himself. Just as He ascended to heaven after His resurrection, so will He return and set up a new Jerusalem on earth (Revelation 21). At that time, all God's promises to Israel will be fulfilled.

Adjusting names and situations, this prophet of 7th century B.C. could stand in a pulpit today and deliver the same message of judgment of the wicked and hope for the faithful.

Points to watch for

God had been patient with his rebellious people. He had sent prophets over a long period of time to warn them of coming judgement. Now that day of reckoning was drawing near.

1. God is offended by the moral and religious sins of his people.
2. His people will not escape punishment when they sin wilfully.
3. Punishment may be painful, but its purpose may be redemptive rather than punitive.
4. The inevitability of the punishment of wickedness gives comfort when it *seems* that evil is unbridled and victorious.
5. A person has the **freedom to disobey God** but not the freedom to escape the consequences of that disobedience.
6. Those who are faithful to God may be relatively few, but He does not forget them. They will rejoice in his salvation and in his blessings.

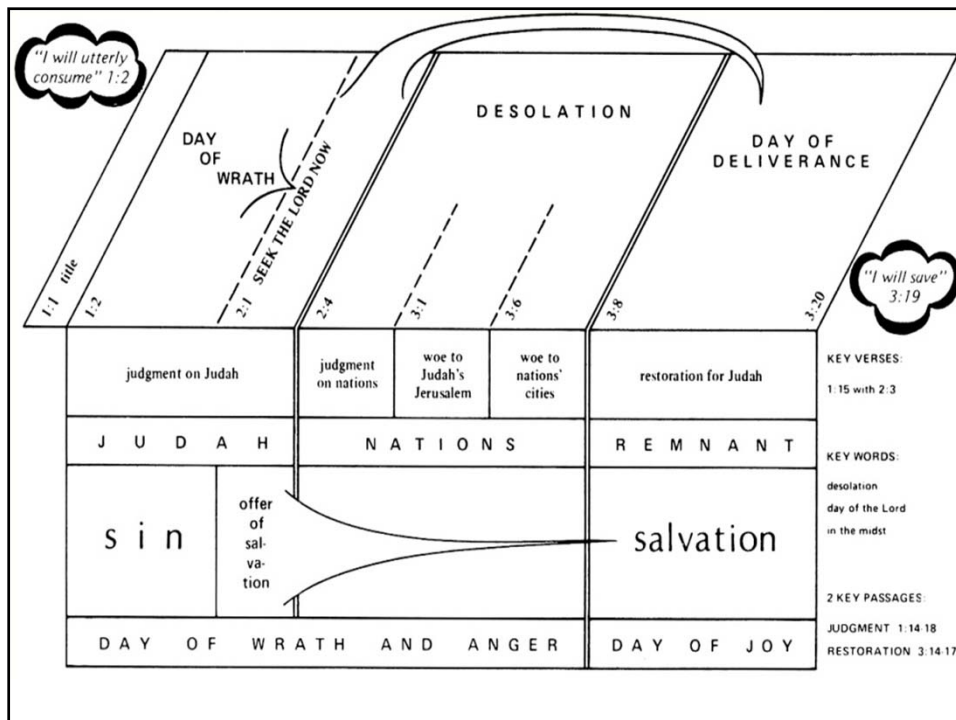
Zephaniah's Bottom Line

Two major emphases underscore Zephaniah's message:

Judgement

of the wicked

Hope for the faithful.



IF YOU THINK THIS
SOUNDS LIKE THE
 BOOK OF
REVELATION, THEN
 YOU ARE PAYING
 ATTENTION!

Zephaniah	<u>Parallels</u>	Revelation
Judgment on Israel ZEPHANIAH 1	JUDGMENT ON GOD'S PEOPLE (present)	Judgment on the Church REVELATION 1-3
West (2:4-7), East (2:8-11), South (2:12), North (2:13-15) ZEPHANIAH 2	JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS (future)	Seals, Trumpets, Bowls, Thunders REVELATION 4-16
Rebelling (3:1-4) Resisting (3:5-7) Obliteration (3:8) ZEPHANIAH 3:1-8	THE DAY OF JUDGMENT	Christ on Earth Armageddon REVELATION 19-20
The Old Jerusalem ZEPHANIAH 3:9-20	GOD GIVES HIS PEOPLE A PLACE TO LIVE FOREVER	The New Jerusalem REVELATION 21-22
Chapters 17-18 (Man on Earth)		

Zephaniah 1 – The Coming Judgment

¹ The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

English	Hebrew	Strong's	Biblical Usage
Hizkiah	חִזְקִיָּה Chizqiyah	H2396	"Jehovah is my strength"
Amariah	אַמְרִיָּה 'Amaryah	H568	"Jehovah speaks" or "Yah(u) has promised"
Gedaliah	גְּדַלְיָה Gēdalyah	H1436	"Jehovah is great"
Cushi	כּוּשִׁי Kuwshiy	H3570	"their blackness"
Zephaniah	צְפַנְיָה Tsēphanyah	H6846	"Jehovah has treasured"

The Coming Judgment

Foreign Religions (vv 1:4-2:3)

- Deserved (1:4-6)
- Declared (1:7-9)
- Described(1:10-17)
- Deflected (2:2-3)

Foredoomed Regions (vv 2:4-15)

- West - Philistia (2:4-7)
- East – Moab, Ammon (2:9-11)
- South – Egypt, Ethiopia (2:12)
- North – Assyria (2:13-15)

The Great Day of the Lord

² “I will utterly consume everything
From the face of the land,”

Says the LORD;

³ “I will consume man and beast;

I will consume the birds of the heavens,

The fish of the sea,

And the stumbling blocks along with the wicked.

I will cut off man from the face of the land,”

Says the LORD.

⁴ “I will stretch out My hand against Judah,

And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place,

The names of the idolatrous priests with the *pagan* priests—



[Actual word is “הַכֹּהֲנִים” (*Chemarim*) which means “black priests”.]

KJV

[סוף *to terminate*]

WORD PICTURE

Zeph 1:2-3

Judgement
will be like a
devastating
universal
flood

Three forms of idolatry

⁵ **Those who** worship the host of heaven on the housetops;

Those who worship and swear *oaths* by the LORD,
But who *also* swear by Milcom [*aka Moloch, Baal, others*];

⁶ **Those who** have turned back from *following* the LORD,
And have not sought the LORD, nor inquired of Him.”

NOTE - Two Categories

1. Those who have known the LORD but departed.
2. Those (unsaved) who are indifferent.

A prophetic message

The Scriptures, beginning with the Book of Judges, teach a philosophy of human government, which you will find was true of God's people and which has been true of every nation.

1. The first step in a nation's decline is ***Religious Apostasy***, turning away from God.
2. The second step downward for a nation is ***Immorality***.
3. The third step downward is ***Political Anarchy***.

Gibbons' Decline and Fall of Rome

1. The undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home as the basis of society;
2. Higher and higher taxes; the spending of public money for free bread and circuses;
3. The mad craze for pleasure; sports and entertainments (ever more violent);
4. The building of great armaments, even though the enemy was within;
5. The decay of religion, fading into mere form, losing power to guide the people.

[Source: Gibbon (a non-Christian historian).]

- 7 Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD;
For the day of the LORD *is* at hand,
For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice;
He has invited His guests.
- 8 “And it shall be,
In the day of the LORD’s sacrifice,
That I will punish the princes and the king’s children,
And all such as are clothed with foreign apparel.
- 9 In the same day I will punish
All those who leap over the threshold,
Who fill their masters’ houses with violence and deceit.
- 10 “And there shall be on that day,” says the LORD,
“The sound of a mournful cry from the Fish Gate,
A wailing from the Second Quarter,
And a loud crashing from the hills.
- 11 Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh!
For all the merchant people are cut down;
All those who handle money are cut off.

WORD
PICTURE

Zeph 1:7-13

A great
communal
sacrifice:
but Judah
is the
sacrifice
and
Babylon
the guests

- 12 “And it shall come to pass at that time
That I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
And punish the men Who are settled in complacency,
Who say in their heart,
‘The LORD will not do good, Nor will He do evil.’
- 13 Therefore their goods shall become booty,
And their houses a desolation;
They shall build houses, but not inhabit *them*;
They shall plant vineyards, but not drink their wine.”
-
- 14 The great day of the LORD *is* near;
It is near and hastens quickly.
The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter;
There the mighty men shall cry out.
- 15 That day *is* a day of wrath,
A day of trouble and distress,
A day of devastation and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,

WORD
PICTURE

Zeph 1:14-18

A great
battle



- 16 A day of trumpet and alarm
Against the fortified cities
And against the high towers.
- 17 "I will bring distress upon men,
And they shall walk like blind men,
Because they have sinned against
the LORD;
Their blood shall be poured out
like dust,
And their flesh like refuse."
- 18 Neither their silver nor their gold
Shall be able to deliver them
In the day of the LORD's wrath;
But the whole land shall be devoured
By the fire of His jealousy,
For He will make speedy riddance
Of all those who dwell in the land.

16th Century Hymn

*Day of wrath,
O day of mourning!
See fulfilled the
prophet's warning,
Heaven and earth
in ashes burning.
Oh, what fear
man's bosom rendeth
When from Heav'n
the Judge descendeth
On whose sentence
all dependeth!*

Chap. 2 – Judgement on Judah’s Enemies

A Call to Repentance

- ¹ Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together,
O undesirable nation,
- ² Before the decree is issued, *Or* the day passes like chaff,
Before the LORD’s fierce anger comes upon you,
Before the day of the LORD’s anger comes upon you!
- ³ Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth,
Who have upheld His justice.
Seek righteousness, seek humility.
It may be that you will be hidden In the day of the LORD’s
anger.

Judgment on Nations

- ⁴ For Gaza shall be forsaken, And Ashkelon desolate;
They shall drive out Ashdod at noonday,
And Ekron shall be uprooted.
- ⁵ Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast,
The nation of the Cherethites!
The word of the LORD is against you,
O Canaan, land of the Philistines:
“I will destroy you; So there shall be no inhabitant.”



- ⁶ The seacoast shall be pastures,
With shelters for shepherds and folds for flocks.
- ⁷ The coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah;
They shall feed *their* flocks there;
In the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening.
For the LORD their God will intervene for them,
And return their captives.
- ⁸ “I have heard the reproach of Moab,
And the insults of the people of Ammon,
With which they have reproached My people,
And made arrogant threats against their borders.
- ⁹ Therefore, as I live,”
Says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel,
“Surely Moab shall be like Sodom,
And the people of Ammon like Gomorrah—
Overrun with weeds and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation.
The residue of My people shall plunder them,
And the remnant of My people shall possess them.”

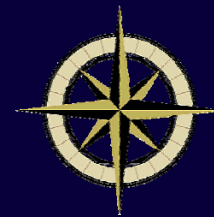


¹⁰ This they shall have for their pride,
Because they have reproached and made arrogant threats
Against the people of the LORD of hosts.

¹¹ The LORD *will be* awesome to them,
For He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth;
People shall worship Him,
Each one from his place,
Indeed all the shores of the nations.

¹² “You Ethiopians also,
You shall be slain by My sword.”

S



¹³ And He will stretch out His hand against the north,
Destroy Assyria, And make Nineveh a desolation,
As dry as the wilderness.

¹⁴ The herds shall lie down in her midst,
Every beast of the nation.
Both the pelican and the bittern
Shall lodge on the capitals *of her pillars*;
Their voice shall sing in the windows;
Desolation *shall be* at the threshold;
For He will lay bare the cedar work.

¹⁵ This is the rejoicing city
That dwelt securely,
That said in her heart,
“*I am it, and there is none besides me.*”
How has she become a desolation,
A place for beasts to lie down!
Everyone who passes by her
Shall hiss and shake his fist.



Judgment and Redemption (3:1-20)

- **Curse** – divine justice (3:1-8)
 - National obstinacy (3:1-7)
 - Rebellious (3:1-4)
 - Resisting (3:5-7)
 - International obliteration (3:8)
- **Blessing** – divine mercy (3:9-20)
 - International Godliness (3:9)
 - National gladness (3:10-20)
 - Rejoicing (3:10-17)
 - Returning (3:18-20)

Chap. 3 – Judgment on Jerusalem and the Nations

The Wickedness of Jerusalem

- ¹ Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted,
To the oppressing city!
- ² She has not obeyed *His* voice,
She has not received correction;
She has not trusted in the LORD,
She has not drawn near to her God.
- ³ Her princes in her midst *are* roaring lions;
Her judges *are* evening wolves
That leave not a bone till morning.
- ⁴ Her prophets are insolent, treacherous people;
Her priests have polluted the sanctuary,
They have done violence to the law.
- ⁵ The LORD *is* righteous in her midst,
He will do no unrighteousness.
Every morning He brings His justice to light;
He never fails, But the unjust knows no shame.

A Faithful Remnant

- 6 “I have cut off nations,
Their fortresses are devastated;
I have made their streets desolate,
With none passing by.
Their cities are destroyed;
There is no one, no inhabitant.
- 7 I said, ‘Surely you will fear Me,
You will receive instruction’—
So that her dwelling would not be cut off,
Despite everything for which I punished her.
But they rose early and corrupted all their deeds.
- 8 “Therefore wait for Me,” says the LORD,
“Until the day I rise up for plunder;
My determination *is* to gather the nations
To My assembly of kingdoms,
To pour on them My indignation,
All My fierce anger;
All the earth shall be devoured
With the fire of My jealousy.

- 9 “For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language,
That they all may call on the name of the LORD,
To serve Him with one accord.
- 10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia
My worshipers, The daughter of My dispersed ones,
Shall bring My offering.
- 11 In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds
In which you transgress against Me;
For then I will take away from your midst
Those who rejoice in your pride,
And you shall no longer be haughty In My holy mountain.
- 12 I will leave in your midst A meek and humble people,
And they shall trust in the name of the LORD.
- 13 The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness
And speak no lies,
Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth;
For they shall feed *their* flocks and lie down,
And no one shall make *them* afraid.”

**Joy in God's
Faithfulness**

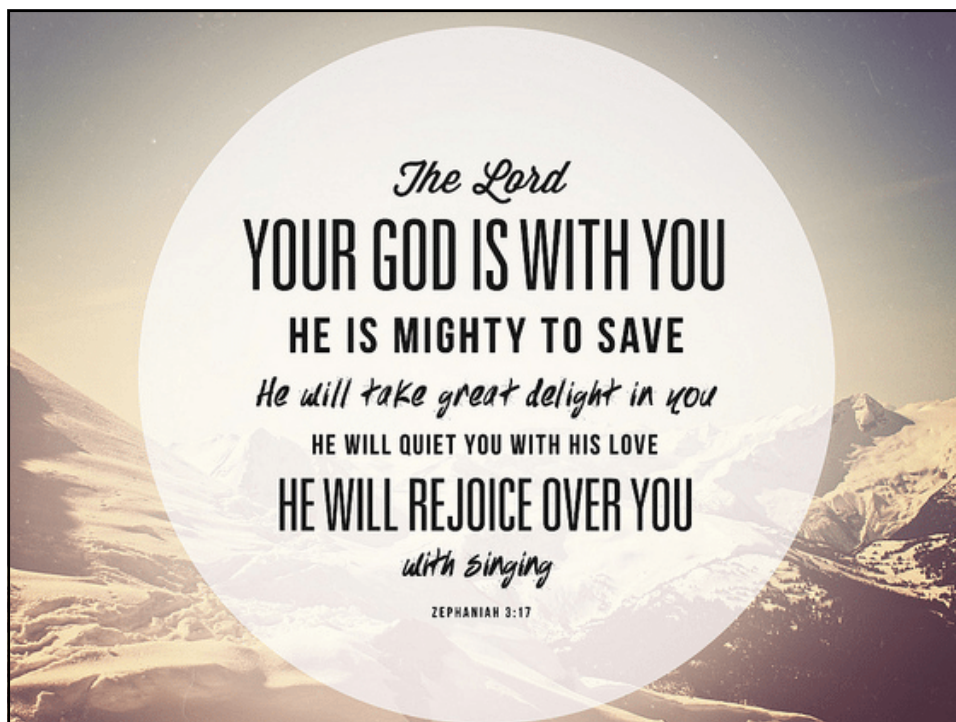
14 Sing, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with *your* heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!

15 The LORD has taken away your judgments,
He has cast out your enemy.
The King of Israel, the LORD, *is* in
your midst;
You shall see disaster no more.

16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
"Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands
be weak.

17 The LORD your God in your midst,
The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet *you* with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing."

The Lord your God
is among you
He is mighty
to save He
will rejoice over
you with gladness
He will calm
you with His
Love He will
be joyful over
you with praise
Zephaniah 3:17



- 18 "I will gather those who sorrow over the appointed assembly,
Who are among you,
To whom its reproach is a burden.
- 19 Behold, at that time
I will deal with all who afflict you;
I will save the lame,
And gather those who were driven out;
I will appoint them for praise and fame
In every land where they were put to shame.
- 20 At that time I will bring you back,
Even at the time I gather you;
For I will give you fame and praise
Among all the peoples of the earth,
When I return your captives before your eyes,"
Says the LORD.

The structure of Zephaniah

A	1:2-3		Judgement on all the earth
	B	1:4-2:3	Judgement on Judah and Jerusalem
		C	2:4-15 Judgement on the surrounding nations
	B	3:1-7	Judgement on Jerusalem
A	3:8		Judgement on all the earth



Major and Minor Prophets

- There are 42 prophets (*navi*) in the Old Testament, including five women (*neviah*)¹.
- Sixteen prophets are accorded large sections (books):
 - Four have long books (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel)
 - Twelve have smaller books. The Hebrew Bible treats these as a single book called “The Book of the Twelve Prophets”.
- John the Baptist was the last prophet of the Old era. Jesus Christ brought in a new age of prophetic truth.

1. Isaiah’s wife; Huldah; Miriam; Deborah; Noadiah

The 'so-called' Minor Prophets

- It is an unfortunate misconception that because these books are called "The Minor Prophets", their relevance to our lives is also "minor".
- This couldn't be further from the truth. The richness of life's lessons and our prophetic hope permeate every word.
- Don't be tricked into missing these overwhelmingly rich studies.

The Minor Prophets and Their Message

	<p>Hosea The Lord loves Israel despite her sin. 755-15 B.C.</p>	<p>Joel Judgment precedes Israel's spiritual revival. 835-796* B.C.</p>	<p>Amos God is just and must judge sin. 765-50 B.C.</p>
	<p>Obadiah Retribution must overtake merciless pride. 848* B.C.</p>	<p>Jonah Divine grace is universal in its sweep. 780-50 B.C.</p>	<p>Micah Bethlehem-born Messiah will deliver mankind. 740-690 B.C.</p>
▲ EXILE ▼	<p>Nahum Doom is to descend on wicked Nineveh. 630-12 B.C.</p>	<p>Habakkuk Justification by faith is God's way. 625 B.C. or earlier</p>	<p>Zephaniah The day of the Lord must precede kingdom blessing. 625-10 B.C.</p>
	<p>Haggai The Lord's temple and interests deserve top priority. 520 B.C.</p>	<p>Zechariah The Lord will remember his people Israel. 520-15 B.C.; Zech 9-14 after 500</p>	<p>Malachi Let the wicked be warned by the certainty of judgment. 433-400 B.C.</p>

Chronological Order of the Prophets

• Before the Exile

• Obadiah	to Edom	887 B.C.
• Jonah	to Nineveh	862 B.C.
• Joel	to Judah	800 B.C. (835-756?)
• Amos	to Northern Kingdom	787 B.C.
• Hosea	to Northern Kingdom	785 - 725 B.C.
• Isaiah	to Judah	760 - 698 B.C.
• Micah	to Judah	750 – 710 B.C.
• Nahum	to Nineveh	713 B.C.
• Zephaniah	to Judah	630 B.C.
• Habakkuk	to Judah	626 B.C.
• Jeremiah	to Judah	629 – 588 B.C.

• During the Exile

• Jeremiah	.....	629 – 588 B.C.
• Ezekiel	.....	595 – 574 B.C.
• Daniel	.....	607 – 534 B.C.

• After the Exile

• Haggai	.....	520 B.C.
• Zechariah	.....	520 – 518 B.C.
• Malachi	.....	397 B.C.