

A roll of parchment is shown on a wooden surface, with a textured brown background. The parchment is unrolled, showing its texture and the way it is bound. The background has a mottled, aged appearance with various shades of brown and orange.

*Praying through
the Minor Prophets*

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1. Hosea: The Prophet of Amazing Love

The book of Hosea is a love story. Hosea is told by the Lord to marry a woman who bears him three children. She becomes a prostitute and Hosea eventually has to purchase her back from her life of sin. In this forceful analogy, God is making it clear that His people which are so loved, have prostituted themselves with the world. Because God is Holy this sin is unacceptable. Because God is Just, He disciplines those He loves and because He Loves so deeply His people will eventually be bought back and restored.

Hosea 2:19, 20, 23

“I will betroth you to Me forever;
Yes, I will betroth you to Me
In righteousness and justice,
In lovingkindness and mercy;
I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,
And you shall know the LORD.
Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth,
And I will have mercy on *her who had* not obtained
mercy;
Then I will say to *those who were* not My people,
‘You *are* My people!’ And they shall say, ‘You *are* my
God!’”

Dear Lord, Thank you for your unconditional and everlasting love. Forgive me for walking away from your love and grace and restore to me the joy of your salvation.

2. Joel: The Alarming Prophet

The Prophet Joel ministered during a time when a tremendous plague of locusts was ravaging the Holy Land and the people of God. He used this imagery of the invading army of insects to proclaim the “Day of the LORD.” The message was not lost on the children of Israel. God had used a similar army in the past against Egypt to help secure their release from the pharaoh. Now God was turning His discipline on His own children. Joel pleaded with Israel to repent and turn back to God, who was a merciful God and slow to anger. Joel also used this event to foreshadow the end of days as recorded much later in the book of Revelation. The Day of the Lord is also used in the sense that one day, God will secure a time for His children of total rest in Him forever.

Joel 2:1-2 Blow the trumpet in Zion,
And sound an alarm in My holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble;
For the day of the LORD is coming,
For it is at hand.² A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
Like the morning *clouds* spread over the mountains.
Joel 2:12 “Now, therefore,” says the LORD,
“Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping,
and with mourning.”¹³ So rend your heart, and not your garments;
Return to the LORD your God, For He *is* gracious and
merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness;
And He relents from doing harm.

Lord, you promised to restore the years the locusts have eaten when we turn in humility and contrition to you. May you reveal yourself in my life as I walk in anticipation of the Day of the Lord.

3. Amos: the Rural Prophet

The name, Amos, means “burdened” and certainly this prophet was burdened by the sins of the people of Israel. Amos came from the south to minister to the north and tell them of God’s coming judgment. He ministered at a time when the nation was experiencing prosperity and an interest in spiritual things, although this interest was not deep or sincere. Amos outlines seven transgressions against the nations surrounding Israel and then mentions an eighth: the nation of Israel was in many ways worse than the pagan nations around them. He then preaches three sermons and five images of future judgment. Yet even through all of this, God promised to restore His people if they would repent. Amos tells us that the Lion of Judah has roared, he has heard its voice and has made the prophecy clear to all the people.

Amos 3: 1,2, 7,8

Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” Can two walk together, unless they are agreed? Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?

Dear God, keep me from the sin of judging other people and other nations and disregarding the sin in my own life. I am your child and a member of the house of faith and truth. Don’t let me complain against the splinter in my neighbor’s eye and miss the log in my own. Lord, I do know better, your Holy Spirit has planted the Word of God in my life and heart. Help me to do what I know is right and make me into the person who’s life conforms to the image of Christ.

4. Obadiah: The Prophet of Justice Served

The Prophet Obadiah prophesied against the Edomites. Their capitol city was the red rock city of Petra. They were descended from the person of Esau who disliked his brother Jacob. The Edomites were happy when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and they even helped their enemy. For this, God determined to do to Edom what they had done to His children. In this short book, Obadiah predicted the absolute ruin of Edom but held out hope that Israel would one day be restored.

Obadiah 1:3-4 The pride of your heart has deceived you, *You* who dwell in the clefts of the rock, Whose habitation is high; *You* who say in your heart, ‘Who will bring me down to the ground?’ Though you ascend *as* high as the eagle, And though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down,” says the LORD.

“Obadiah 1:15, 21 For the day of the LORD upon all the nations *is* near; As you have done, it shall be done to you; Your reprisal shall return upon your own head... And the kingdom shall be the LORD’s.

Dear Lord, Forgive our nation for not always standing by Israel. May we be a good friend and ally to your people in these days. Please do not let me or our nation become proud and arrogant, complacent in our economy and power. May we love justice and seek the welfare of the nations around us. Let this mercy start with my next door neighbor, my relatives and friends. My I walk uprightly in you realizing you are a God of Justice and as I do to others, it may well be done to me. Help me to be looking forward in eager anticipation for the day you will return and set all things straight.

5. *Jonah: The Reluctant Prophet*

Jonah was a real person who actually lived. He was called by God to be a prophet and we know from Scripture that the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable. (Romans 11:29.) God wanted to spare the nation of Assyria and its capitol city Nineveh. Jonah knew that God was a forgiving God, but felt the wicked Assyrians deserved to be destroyed. He chose to run the other way when he received the call of God. In this small book of just four chapters, the name of God is mentioned thirty eight times. This book is not about a reluctant prophet or a wicked nation that repented, it is designed to help us understand the compassionate heart of our loving God.

Jonah 1: 1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.”

Jonah 3:10 When God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

Jonah 4:1-2 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. ² So he prayed to the LORD, and said, “Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You *are* a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.

Lord, may I not shrink from obeying your voice, may I be true to my gifts and calling. Keep me from trying to do your work for you or doing my will in my way. Use me to bring many into your kingdom, in Jesus name. Amen.

6. *Micah: The Prophet of the Kingdom of God*

Micah was a prophet that spoke against both the southern and northern kingdoms of Israel and Judah. His name means, “Who is like the Lord?” He uses vivid imagery and clever plays on words to drive God’s message home. Micah calls to order, three trials against the nation, against the leaders and finally against the people, but in the middle of his prophecy, Micah declares a court recess as he describes the vision God gave him of a Messiah that would be born in the future. Unknown to those of his day, the first advent of Christ would come almost 750 years later. But Micah also saw the second coming of Christ, and like the first vision, we do not know when it will happen. Today we have waited over 2,000 years for the second advent, but it will come, as surely as the prophecies of Micah have come true in the fullness of time. Until then, Micah tells us how we should live and walk with our God.

Micah 1:2-4 Hear, all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it! Let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, The Lord from His holy temple. For behold, the LORD is coming out of His place; He will come down And tread on the high places of the earth. The mountains will melt under Him, And the valleys will split like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place. Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?

Dear Lord, I know a time of judgment is coming for all nations, leaders and people. I know that you will judge me according to what I have done with my life. Help me to walk in humility justice and mercy all the days of my life.

7. Nahum: The Prophet of Doom

One hundred years after Nineveh had its revival under Jonah, they were back into sin and their old ways. True to God's nature, He sent a prophet to warn the city of the impending doom that would come upon them at the hands of the Babylonians. God sent Nahum, a prophet whose name means "Comfort." Although he prophesied doom for one nation, that meant comfort for the people of God who were being savagely treated by the Assyrians. We learn from this short book of God's zeal for righteousness, His long suffering nature, His sovereignty and that He is always good. Nahum does provide comfort to the child of God as we remember that God's hand is not so short that it cannot save, and that whatever His children are going through, He is there to comfort and guide and protect.

Nahum 1:2: The LORD is zealous, and the LORD avenges; the Lord avenges and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies;

1:3: The LORD is slow to anger and great in power. He will not acquit the wicked

1:7: The LORD is good. A stronghold in the day of trouble and He knows those who trust in Him.

Lord I know you are the sovereign one. You are God and you are Good. Help me to remember that nothing can happen to me without your knowledge and permission. Help me in these days not to be anxious and worry or be afraid, knowing that you will one day make all things right.

8. Habakkuk: The Prophet of Prayer

Habakkuk's name means "to embrace." This either refers to the fact that he came to grips with some serious questions and issues between himself and his God, or that he chose to hold tight to God even when his world around him was falling apart. This prophet went to God with a concern; the nation of Judah had again lapsed back into idolatry and sin under the wicked king, Jehoiakim. Habakkuk went to God and asked how long God would allow such rebellion among His children. Habakkuk was not ready for God's answer. God told the prophet that He was sending the Chaldeans or Babylonians to take the nation into captivity. That God would use a nation more wicked and perverse than Judah to discipline His people sent Habakkuk into a tail spin. He just could not understand why God would do such a thing. Habakkuk was a prophet who spoke to God on behalf of men, unlike the other prophets to spoke to men on behalf of God. We learn from a series of encounters with God that Habakkuk begins to understand why bad things happen to good people. In his last chapter, he is singing a song to God in genuine worship and praise. Habakkuk started out wavering in his faith, he began to watch and finally to worship. He starts out in a pit of despair, moves up to the watchtower and finally goes up to the mountain tops to sing praise to the living God.

Habakkuk 2:4b: But the just shall live by his faith.

Dear Loving Heavenly Father, help me to have greater faith in you, even when I can't see your hand, help me to have faith to trust your heart. When tragedy strikes, help me to remember the greater tragedy of your son's death on a cross for my sins and that you promised to never leave me or forsake me.

9. Zephaniah: *The Prophet of the Day of the Lord*

Unlike the other prophets who were farmers or ordinary people, Zephaniah was a royal and related to the king, Josiah. Under King Josiah, a revival of sorts was breaking out, but it was only a surface revival and was not deep lived. During this revival, Jephaniah whose name means, "God has hidden," was called by the LORD to deliver a message of condemnation. His three messages were, Look Up, Look Out and Look Ahead.

Zephaniah, like many of the other prophets focused on the coming "Day of the Lord." Few of the men realized that this day would have local and regional impact as well as a much future date, a second fulfillment, when God would release His people from all captivity and set all things right forever under the kingdom of Christ Jesus the Messiah.

Similar to the other prophets, Zephaniah revealed that God would come against sin in wrath, but in wrath He would remember mercy. God is a Holy God and a Just God. Zephaniah looked forward to a time when the people would rejoice and sing after their captivity, and that surprisingly, God would sing over them!

Zephaniah 1:7 Be silent in the presence of the LORD God; For the day of the LORD is at hand. For the LORD has preredared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests.

1:14 The great day of the Lord is near; it is near and hastens quickly 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."

LORD, I look forward and long for the day that you will no longer be hidden. In your justice, remember mercy and even so, come Lord Jesus. Maranatha!

10. Haggai: *The Prophet of Blessing*

The seventy years of captivity was finally ended, the Jews were allowed to return home to Jerusalem and they could begin to rebuild the temple. However after 16 years in the land, the people had still not begun to rebuild the house of the Lord. They had several lame excuses for this, and Haggai comes on the scene with four messages. They are delivered in a span of three months, with the last two being preached on the same day. Haggai's entire ministry was condensed down into three months, but in that time, he stirred a renewed passion in the leader, Zerubbabel and in the people, so that rebuilding began in earnest.

Some of the people who had remembered Solomon's temple were sad by the shape of the new temple and even complained about it, but God assured them that this temple would have even greater glory than Solomon's. We understand this to mean that hundreds of years later, God's true signet, Jesus Christ would cleanse this temple and bring to mankind the greatest and most glorious expression of God's love and mercy.

Haggai 1:3-5; Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses and this temple to lie in ruins?" Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts; "Consider your ways!"

2:9: "The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former," says the LORD of hosts. "And in this place I will give peace," says the Lord of hosts.

Dear God, help me not to make excuses for not doing what you clearly have told me to do. Give me courage and strength to be your person in this generation. Grant that I may be a messenger of Your reconciliation and peace.

11. Zechariah: The Prophet of the Temple

The prophet Zechariah ministered along side of Haggai as they encouraged the returning Jews to rebuild the destroyed first temple. Zechariah's name means, "God remembers." The people, a remnant of the former glorious nation had felt neglected and forgotten, but Zechariah reminds them that God has not forsaken or forgotten them. He remembers and He will keep His promises that He made concerning Jerusalem and the Holy land.

God gave this prophet eight visions and two burdens or oracles about the nation's future. Unlike Haggai, Zechariah wrote a long book with visions. Haggai had no visions and recorded only four short sermons. Zechariah's first eight chapters deal with prophecies during the work on the temple and from 9-14 are prophecies after the temple is rebuilt.

Zechariah also had a prophetic word that looked ahead to a future time and a greater glory. He reminded the people that they were not just building a building but building a future. Both prophets were needed to encourage the people and restart the building process. God still uses teams of people today to accomplish His ministry.

Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt the foal of a donkey."

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for the words of your prophets, thank you for the insight into your heart that flows from their ministries. Help me to be a team player, joining with other of your servants to accomplish your ministry in this time and place. May I use my time, talents and treasures to further your work and to bring about a glorious future in your Kingdom. through a large harvest of souls.

12. Malachi: The Prophet of the Coming of the Lord

Malachi's name means, "The messenger." This is very appropriate as he is the last of the Old Testament prophets and his book foreshadows the coming of John the Baptist, the messenger, who would proceed God's very own messenger, Jesus Christ. Malachi prophesied during the time of Nehemiah when the people felt they were very privileged to be the people of God, yet they did not act like it. They had backslidden into complacency and sins, they questioned God's timing, while God questioned their love and commitment.

Malachi 3:1-3: Behold, I send My messenger, and He will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple. Even the messenger of the covenant in who you delight Behold He is coming says the Lord of Hosts. But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like a launderer's soap. (He will purge the sons of Levi) that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness.

3:8-10 Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, In what way have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in my house and try me now in this says the Lord of hosts; If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.

Lord, Keep the fire burning within me. May I, like your prophets, be a messenger of your gospel, not seeking fame or fortune, but to be found faithful when you return or you take me home. Guard my heart, my finances and my commitment to you. In Jesus Name, Amen

I sincerely hope that this has been an enriching experience and discipline for you. God has spoken through His prophets. Their messages are as fresh today as when they were first presented. While we are not the first audience or recipients of the messages, and these were not written to us, they are certainly written for us. There is so much we can learn about God from His not-so-minor prophets.

The other thing that praying through the prophets does for us is to reorient us to our true North. Similar to calibrating a compass, the messages of the prophets pull us deeper into a spirituality that is not complacent or lackadaisical, but is passionate, full of life and effective.

Additional Notes:

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**IF MY PEOPLE WHO ARE
CALLED BY MY NAME WILL
HUMBLE THEMSELVES, AND
PRAY AND SEEK MY FACE,
AND TURN FROM THEIR
WICKED WAYS, THEN I WILL
HEAR FROM HEAVEN, AND
WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN
AND HEAL THEIR LAND.**