OLD TESTAMENT EXPERT

The Minor Prophets, Nahum – Malachi

Lesson # 11

I. **REVIEW: WRITE DOWN THE THEMES AND OUTLINES OF ISAIAH - DANIEL**

A. **Theme of Hosea is:**

1. Outline of Hosea
   a.

   b.

B. **Theme of Joel is:**

1. Outline of Joel
   a.

   b.

C. **Theme of Amos is:**

1. Outline of Amos
   a.

   b.

   c.

   d.

D. **Theme of Obadiah is:**

1. Outline of Obadiah
   a.

   b.

E. **Theme of Jonah is:**

1. Outline of Jonah
   a.

   b.

F. **Theme of Micah is:**

1. Outline of Micah
   a.

   b.

   c.

II. SEE IF YOU CAN MATCH THE NAMES WITH THE NUMBERED DESCRIPTIONS

#	Person	#	Description of Person
	Joel	**1**	Prophet from the town of Moresheth whose name means "Who is like Yahweh?"
	Gomer	**2**	Appointed by God to swallow a prophet.
	Jezreel	**3**	Prophet who was told by God to marry an unfaithful wife and love her unconditionally. His love pictured the love God has for Israel.
	Obadiah	**4**	Descendants of Esau who lived south-east of the Dead Sea. They were judged for they participated in the destruction and captivity of Judah.
	Hosea	**5**	Hosea's youngest son whose name means "Not my people." His name predicted God's rejection of those who would not repent of their idolatry.
	Lo-ruhamah	**6**	Son of Pethuel. Prophet whose name means "Yahweh is God." Prophesied of the coming day of the Lord.
	Lo-ammi	**7**	Appointed by God to shade a prophet.
	Amos	**8**	Oldest son of Hosea whose name means "God scatters." His name predicted what would happen to Israel.
	Edomites	**9**	A prophet, herdsman, and dresser of sycamore trees, who prophesied in the days of Uzziah against Israel.
	Jonah	**10**	Appointed by God to devour the plant that shaded a prophet.
	Micah	**11**	Prophet who wrote the shortest book in the Old Testament. Prophesied against descendants of Esau.
	Worm	**12**	Unfaithful wife of a prophet who had children of harlotry. She represented Israel who played the harlot with pagan gods.
	Scorching East Wind	**13**	Prophet who hated the Ninevites and did not want to preach to them so he fled from the command of God.
	Great fish	**14**	Hosea's daughter whose name means "not pitied." Her name was prophetic of God's attitude towards idolatrous Israel.
	Plant	**15**	Appointed by God to make a prophet's life miserable.

III. THEMES AND STRUCTURES OF NAHUM – MALACHI

A. Theme of Nahum: Nineveh's Judgment

1. Outline of Nahum

   a. God's Holiness ch. 1

   b. Nineveh's Judgment chs. 2-3

2. Key people of Nahum

   a. Nahum – A prophet from Elkoshite. Prophesied about the coming judgment of Nineveh.

3. Summary of Nahum – When God finally convinces His prophet Jonah to preach to the people of Nineveh, the whole city responds with repentance and Nineveh escapes destruction. The people humble themselves before the one true God, but their humility soon changes to arrogance as Assyria reaches its zenith as the most powerful empire in the world. About a century after the preaching of Jonah, God calls Nahum to proclaim the coming destruction of Nineveh. This time there will be no escape, because their measure of wickedness is full. Unlike Jonah, Nahum does not go to the city but declares his oracle from afar. There is no hope of repentance. Nineveh's destruction is decreed (1), described (2), and deserved (3).

   The Destruction of Nineveh Is Decreed (1): Nahum begins with a very clear description of the character of Yahweh. Because of His righteousness, He is a God of vengeance (1:2). God is also characterized by patience (1:3) and power (1:3–6). He is gracious to all who respond to Him, but those who rebel against Him will be overthrown (1:7–8). God is holy, and Nineveh stands condemned because of its sins (1:9–14). Nothing can stand in the way of its judgment, and this is a message of comfort to the people of Judah (1:15). The threat of Assyrian invasion will soon be over.

   The Destruction of Nineveh Is Described (2): Assyria will be conquered, but Judah will be restored (2:1–2). Nahum's description of the siege of Nineveh (2:3–7) and the sack of Nineveh (2:8–13) is one of the most vivid portraits of battle in Scripture. The storming warriors and chariots can almost be seen as they enter the city through a breach in the wall. As the Ninevites flee in terror, the invading army plunders the treasures of the city. Nineveh is burned and cut off forever.

   The Destruction of Nineveh Is Deserved (3): Nahum closes his brief book of judgment with God's reasons for Nineveh's coming overthrow. The city is characterized by cruelty and corruption (3:1–7). Just as Assyria crushed the Egyptian capital city of Thebes (No Amon), Assyria's capital city will also be destroyed (3:8–10). Nineveh is fortified so well that defeat seems impossible, but God proclaims that its destruction is inevitable (3:11–19). None of its resources can deter divine judgment.[1]

[1] Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. Talk Thru the Bible. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983.

B. Theme of Habakkuk – Faith and Doubt

1. Outline of Habakkuk

   a. Habakkuk's Perplexity ch. 1

   b. Habakkuk's Problems ch. 2

   c. Habakkuk's Prayer/Praise ch. 3

2. Key People in Habakkuk

   a. Habakkuk – Prophet who boldly prophesied against sin and asked God to judge his people. Wrote a poem at the end of his book.

3. Summary of Habakkuk – Habakkuk is a freethinking prophet who is not afraid to wrestle with issues that test his faith. He openly and honestly directs his problems to God and waits to see how He will respond to his probing questions. After two rounds of dialogue with the Lord, Habakkuk's increased understanding of the person, power, and plan of God cause him to conclude with a psalm of unqualified praise. The more he knows about the Planner, the more he can trust His plans. No matter what God brings to pass, "the just shall live by his faith" (2:4). The two divisions of this book are: the problems of Habakkuk (1–2); and the praise of Habakkuk (3).

   The Problems of Habakkuk (1–2): Habakkuk's first dialogue with God takes place in chapter 1, verses 1–11. The prophet asks God how long He will allow the wickedness of Judah to go unpunished (1:1–4). The people of Judah sin with impunity, and justice is perverted. God's startling answer is given (1:5–11): He is raising up the fierce Babylonians as His rod of judgment upon sinful Judah. The Chaldeans will come against Judah swiftly, violently, and completely. The coming storm from the east will be God's answer to Judah's crimes.

   This answer leads to Habakkuk's second dialogue with God (1:12–2:20). The prophet is more perplexed than ever and asks how the righteous God can punish Judah with a nation that is even more wicked (1:12–2:1). Will the God whose eyes are too pure to approve evil reward the Babylonians for their cruelty and idolatry? Habakkuk stands upon a watchtower to wait for God's reply. The Lord answers with a series of five woes: greed and aggression (2:5–8), exploitation and extortion (2:9–11), violence (2:12–14), immorality (2:15–17), and idolatry (2:18–20). God is aware of the sins of the Babylonians, and they will not escape His terrible judgment. But Judah is guilty of the same offenses and stands under the same condemnation. Jehovah concludes His answer with a statement of His sovereign majesty: "But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him" (2:20).

   The Praise of Habakkuk (3): Habakkuk begins by questioning God, but he concludes his book with a psalm of praise for the person (3:1–3), power (3:4–12), and plan (3:13–19) of God. He now acknowledges God's wisdom in the coming invasion of Judah, and though it terrifies him, he will trust the Lord. God's creative and redemptive work in the past gives the prophet confidence in the divine purposes, and hope at a time when he would

otherwise despair. "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (3:18).[2]

C. Theme of Zephaniah: Future Global Judgment

1. Outline of Zephaniah

a. Judgment of Judah and Nations chs. 1-2

b. Blessing for Israel's Future ch. 3

2. Key People in Zephaniah

a. Zephaniah – Prophet of Royal lineage from Judah. Great grandson of Hezekiah. Prophesied during the reign of Josiah.

3. Summary of Zephaniah –

On the whole, Zephaniah is a fierce and grim book of warning about the coming day of the Lord. Desolation, darkness, and ruin will strike Judah and the nations because of the wrath of God upon sin. Zephaniah looks beyond judgment, however, to a time of joy when God will cleanse the nations and restore the fortunes of His people Israel. The book begins with God's declaration, "I will utterly consume all things from the face of land" (1:2); but it ends with this promise, "At that time I will bring you back" and "return your captives before your eyes" (3:20). Zephaniah moves three times from the general to the specific: (1) From universal judgment (1:1–3) to judgment upon Judah (1:4–2:3); (2) from judgment upon surrounding nations (2:4–15) to judgment upon Jerusalem (3:1–7); and (3) from judgment and cleansing of all nations (3:8–10) to restoration of Israel (3:11–20). The two broad divisions of the book are: the judgment in the day of the Lord (1:1–3:8) and the salvation in the day of the Lord (3:9–20).

The Judgment in the Day of the Lord (1:1–3:8): The prophetic oracle begins with an awesome statement of God's coming judgment upon the entire earth because of the sins of men (1:2–3). Zephaniah then concentrates on the judgment of Judah (1:4–18), listing some of the offenses that will cause it to come. Judah is polluted with idolatrous priests who promote the worship of Baal and nature, and her officials and princes are completely corrupt. Therefore, the day of the Lord is imminent; and it will be characterized by terror, desolation, and distress. However, by His grace, Yahweh appeals to His people to repent and humble themselves to avert the coming disaster before it is too late (2:1–3).

Zephaniah pronounces God's coming judgment upon the nations that surround Judah (2:4–15). He looks in all four directions: Philistia (west), Moab and Ammon (east), Ethiopia (south), and Assyria (north). Then he focuses on Jerusalem, the center of God's dealings (3:1–7). Jerusalem is characterized by spiritual rebellion and moral treachery. "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" (3:2).

The Salvation in the Day of the Lord (3:9–20): After a broad statement of the judgment of all nations (3:8), Zephaniah changes the tone of the remainder of his book to blessing; for this, too, is an aspect of the day of the Lord. The nation will be cleansed and will call on the name of the Lord (3:9–10). The remnant of Israel will be regathered, redeemed, and

[2] Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. Talk Thru the Bible. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983.

restored (3:11–20). They will rejoice in their Redeemer, and He will be in their midst. Zephaniah opens with idolatry, wrath, and judgment, but closes with true worship, rejoicing, and blessing.[3]

D. Theme of Haggai: Rebuild the Temple

1. Outline of Haggai

a.	Rebuke	ch. 1:1-11
b.	Rebuilding	ch. 1:12-15
c.	Return	ch. 2:1-9
d.	Religious Questions	ch. 2:10-19
e.	Reign of God	ch. 2:20-23

2. Key people in Haggai

   a. Haggai – Prophet who ministered with Zechariah encouraging the people to rebuild the temple.

3. Summary of Haggai– Haggai is second only to Obadiah in brevity among Old Testament books, but this strong and frank series of four terse sermons accomplishes its intended effect. The work on the temple has ceased, and the people have become more concerned with the beautification of their own houses than with the building of the central sanctuary of God. Because of their misplaced priorities, their labor is no longer blessed by God. Only when the people put the Lord first by completing the task He has set before them will His hand of blessing once again be upon them. Haggai acts as God's man in God's hour, and his four messages are: the completion of the latter temple (1:1–15), the glory of the latter temple (2:1–9), the present blessings of obedience (2:10–19), and the future blessings of promise (2:20–23).

   The Completion of the Latter Temple (1:1–15): When the Remnant returns from Babylon under Zerubbabel, they begin to rebuild the temple of the Lord. However, the work soon stops and the people find excuses to ignore it as the years pass. They have no problem in building rich dwellings for themselves ("paneled houses," 1:4) while they claim that the time for building the temple has not yet come (1:2). God withdraws his blessing and they sink into an economic depression. However, they do not recognize what is happening because of their indifference to God and indulgence of self; so God communicates directly to the Remnant through His prophet Haggai. Zerubbabel the governor, Joshua the high priest, and all the people respond; and twenty-three days later they again begin to work on the temple.

   The Glory of the Latter Temple (2:1–9): In a few short weeks, the enthusiasm of the people sours into discouragement; the elders remember the glory of Solomon's temple

[3] Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. Talk Thru the Bible. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983.

and bemoan the puniness of the present temple (see Ezra 3:8–13). Haggai's prophetic word of encouragement reminds the people of God's covenant promises in the past (2:4–5), and of His confident plans for the future (2:6–9): "The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former" (2:9).

The Present Blessings of Obedience (2:10–19): Haggai's message to the priests illustrates the concept of contamination (2:11–13) and applies it to the nation (2:14–19). The Lord requires holiness and obedience, and the contamination of sin blocks the blessing of God. Because the people have obeyed God in building the temple, they will be blessed from that day forward.

The Future Blessings of Promise (2:20–23): On the same day that Haggai addresses the priests, he gives a second message to Zerubbabel. God will move in judgment, and in His power He will overthrow the nations of the earth (2:21–22). At that time, Zerubbabel, a symbol of the Messiah to come, will be honored.[4]

E. Theme of Zechariah: The Messiah is Coming

1. Outline of Zechariah

a.	Call to Repentance	ch. 1:1-6
b.	8 Visions	ch. 1:7-6:15
c.	4 Sermons	chs. 7-8
d.	2 Burdens	chs. 9-14

2. Key People in Zechariah

   a. Zechariah – Son of Berechiah, son of Iddo. Ministered with Haggai and prophesied about the coming Messiah. One of twenty-eight men in the Bible with the same name.

3. Summary of Zechariah – Zechariah uses a series of eight visions, four messages, and two burdens to portray God's future plans for His covenant people. The first eight chapters were written to encourage the Remnant while they were rebuilding the temple; the last six chapters were written after the completion of the temple to anticipate Israel's coming Messiah. Zechariah moves from gentile domination to messianic rule, from persecution to peace, and from uncleanness to holiness. The book divides into the eight visions (1–6), the four messages (7–8), and the two burdens (9–14).

   The Eight Visions (1–6): The book opens with an introductory appeal to the people to repent and return to God, unlike their fathers who rejected the warnings of the prophets (1:1–6). A few months later, Zechariah has a series of eight night visions, evidently in one troubled night (February 15, 519 b.c.; 1:7). The angel who speaks with him interprets the visions, but some of the symbols are not explained. The visions mix the work of the

[4] Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. Talk Thru the Bible. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983.

Messiah in both Advents, and like the other prophets, Zechariah sees only the peaks of God's program without the intervening valleys. The first five are visions of comfort, and the last three are visions of judgment: (1) The horsemen among the myrtle trees—God will rebuild Zion and His people (1:7–17). (2) The four horns and craftsmen—Israel's oppressors will be judged (1:18–21). (3) The man with a measuring line—God will protect and glorify Jerusalem (2:1–13). (4) The cleansing of Joshua the high priest—Israel will be cleansed and restored by the coming Branch (3:1–10). (5) The golden lampstand—God's spirit is empowering Zerubbabel and Joshua (4:1–14). (6) The flying scroll—individual sin will be judged (5:1–4). (7) The woman in the basket—national sin will be removed (5:5–11). (8) The four chariots—God's judgment will descend on the nations (6:1–8). The crowning of Joshua (6:9–15) anticipates the coming of the Branch who will be King and Priest (the composite crown).

The Four Messages (7–8): In response to a question about the continuation of the fasts (7:1–3), God gives Zechariah a series of four messages: (1) A rebuke of empty ritualism (7:4–7); (2) a reminder of past disobedience (7:8–14); (3) the restoration and consolation of Israel (8:1–17); and (4) the recovery of joy in the kingdom (8:18–23).

The Two Burdens (9–14): The first burden (9–11) concerns the First Advent and rejection of Israel's coming King. Alexander the Great will conquer Israel's neighbors, but will spare Jerusalem (9:1–8) which will be preserved for her King (the Messiah; 9:9–10). Israel will succeed against Greece (the Maccabean revolt; 9:11–17), and although they will later be scattered, the Messiah will bless them and bring them back (10:1–11:3). Israel will reject her Shepherd-King and be led astray by false shepherds (11:4–17). The second burden (12–14) concerns the second advent of Christ and the acceptance of Israel's King. The nations will attack Jerusalem, but the Messiah will come and deliver His people (12). They will be cleansed of impurity and falsehood (13), and the Messiah will come in power to judge the nations and reign in Jerusalem over the whole earth (14).[5]

F. Theme of Malachi: Feigned Ignorance

1. Outline of Malachi

   a. God's Pronouncements against Israel chs. 1-3:15

   b. God's Plan to Israel chs. 3:16-4:6

2. Key people in Malachi

   a. Malachi – Prophet who ministered with Nehemiah. Confronted people of Israel about various sins they denied. His prophecy ends with the word "curse."

3. Summary of Malachi– The great prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah are not yet fulfilled, and the people of Israel become disillusioned and doubtful. They begin to question God's providence as their faith imperceptibly degenerates into cynicism. Internally, they wonder whether it is worth serving God after all; and externally, these attitudes surface in mechanical observances, empty ritual, cheating on tithes and

[5] Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. Talk Thru the Bible. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983.

offerings, and crass indifference to God's moral and ceremonial law. Their priests are corrupt and their practices wicked, but they are so spiritually insensitive that they wonder why they are not being blessed by God.

Using a probing series of questions and answers, God seeks to pierce their hearts of stone. In each case the divine accusations are denied: How has God loved us? (1:2–5); How have we (priests) despised God's name? (1:6–2:9); How have we (people) profaned the covenant? (2:10–16); How have we wearied God? (2:17–3:6); How have we robbed God? (3:7–12); and How have we spoken against God? (3:13–15). In effect, the people sneer, "Oh, come on now: it's not that bad!" However, their rebellion is quiet, not open. As their perception of God grows dim, the resulting materialism and externalism become a settled characteristic that later grips the religious parties of the Pharisees and Sadducees. In spite of all this, God still loves His people and once again extends His grace to any who will humbly turn to Him. Malachi explores: the privilege of the nation (1:1–5); the pollution of the nation (1:6–3:15); and the promise to the nation (3:16–4:16).

The Privilege of the Nation (1:1–5): The Israelites blind themselves to God's love for them. Wallowing in the problems of the present, they are forgetful of God's works for them in the past. God gives them a reminder of His special love by contrasting the fates of Esau (Edom) and Jacob (Israel).

The Pollution of the Nation (1:6–3:15): The priests have lost all respect for God's name and in their greed offer only diseased and imperfect animals on the altar. They have more respect for the Persian governor than they do for the living God. Moreover, God is withholding His blessings from them because of their disobedience to God's covenant and their insincere teaching.

The people are indicted for their treachery in divorcing the wives of their youth in order to marry foreign women (2:10–16). In response to their questioning the justice of God, they receive a promise of the Messiah's coming but also a warning of the judgment that He will bring (2:17–3:6). The people have robbed God of the tithes and offerings due Him, but God is ready to bless them with abundance if they will put Him first (3:7–12). The final problem is the arrogant challenge to the character of God (3:13–15), and this challenge is answered in the remainder of the book.

The Promise to the Nation (3:16–4:6): The Lord assures His people that a time is coming when the wicked will be judged and those who fear Him will be blessed. The day of the Lord will reveal that it is not "vain to serve God" (3:14).

Malachi ends on the bitter word "curse." Although the people are finally cured of idolatry, there is little spiritual progress in Israel's history. Sin abounds, and the need for the coming Messiah is greater than ever.[6]

IV. HOMEWORK

A. Keep going through your flash cards for all of the books examined so far.

B. Read through the summary information for Nahum through Malachi and memorize the themes, outlines and key people.

C. Read the assigned chapters below.

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[6]Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. Talk Thru the Bible. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983.

1. Nahum

   a. Chapter 1

   b. Chapter 3

2. Habakkuk
   a. Chapter 2

   b. Chapter 3

3. Zephaniah
   a. Whole book

4. Haggai
   a. Whole book

5. Zechariah
   a. Chapter 4

   b. Chapter 8

   c. Chapter 9

   d. Chapter 12

   e. Chapter 14

6. Malachi
   a. Whole book