A People of the Book 8-Year Curriculum Year 2, Quarter 4

A Study of Selected Texts from

Minor Prophets I (Hosea – Obadiah)

Mike White

Minor Prophets Table of Contents

Study Purpose: To understand who Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Obadiah were in terms of their times, their calling by God, and their fearless lives of faith. Knowing more about these Godly men facing extraordinary challenges we in the 21st century might be encouraged in our faith.

Week 1- Introduction to the Minor-Prophets Week 2- Introduction to the Minor-Prophets and Hosea Lesson 1 Week 3- Hosea Lesson 2 Week 4- Hosea Lesson 3 Week 5- Joel Lesson 1 Week 6- Joel Lesson 2 Week 7- Amos Lesson 1 Week 8- Amos Lesson 2 Week 9- Amos Lesson 3 Week 10- Obadiah Week 11- Preaching from the Prophets (if time permits)* Week 12- Preaching from the Prophets (if time permits)* Week 13- Preaching from the Prophets (if time permits)*

*Should time permit I will prepare lesson plans to focus on those topics in Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Obadiah most relevant to our lives in Christ in the 21st Century.

Mike White

Introduction to the Minor Prophets

Read Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah

Lesson Purpose: To provide an introduction and background to the times of the minor-prophets particularly Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Obadiah. The study of the minor-prophets allows us to better understand the character of God, the responsibility and mistakes of man, and the importance of the Word of the Lord in helping us to self correct our lives before it is too late. These minorprophets are living in extraordinarily difficult and uncertain times as war clouds build on the horizon. What is hard to understand is that these prophets preached to a complacent and smug crowd who thought that God would protect them even in their outrageous sin. Whether it is the tragic life of Hosea, the locust plague of Joel, Amos's preaching truth to power to a collapsing society in the Northern Kingdom, or Obadiah's certain prediction of Edom's demise for taking advantage of the Jews in defeat the message is clear: God is in control. I think the message of the minor-prophets is as relevant today as it was over 25-27 centuries ago. This is a tribute to the eternality of God's Word and its potential power in our lives IF we will read it and apply it. May God bless you through this study.

Some points for discussion:

1. Do you believe that politics and economics are the final arbiters of history or do you think God is?

- 2. What do you think about these basic points for understanding the prophets?
 - The prophet is a man who is moved by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:20-21.
 - The prophet cannot introduce strange religions...he calls people back to the law of Moses. Duet. 13:1-5
 - The true prophet is the man whose oracles come to pass. Duet. 18:20-22
 - Prophecy is conditional. Jer. 18:5-11
 - The prophets lived before and immediately after the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles.
 - Christ's first coming and the beginning of the church are important subjects of OT prophecy. Rom. 1:2, Acts 3:24-26, 1 Peter 1:10-12
 - God's final revelation is made in His Son. Heb.1:1-2
- 3. There are 12 minor-prophets. They are only minor in the sense that their books are short. Do you agree or not?
- 4. Why are these dates important in understanding the minor-prophets?
 - 721 BC-the fall of the Northern Kingdom (Samaria) to Assyria and the exile of Israel.
 - 612 BC-The fall of Ninevah capital of the Assyrian empire to the Babylonians.
 - 606 BC- Babylon whips Egypt at Carchemish and becomes dominant in the Middle East
 - > 597 BC-the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar
 - 586 BC-the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar
 - 539 BC-Persia whips Babylon and becomes dominant in the Middle East

- 536 BC-the decree of Cyrus allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and begin reconstruction of the temple.
- 520 BC-Haggai and Zechariah stir up the Jews to resume work on the temple.
- 516 BC-the completion and dedication of the second temple.
- > 457 BC-the return of Ezra
- > 445 BC-Nehemiah rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem.
- 5. Do you have any comments on my opinion that Hosea and Amos prophesy in the lead up to the Assyrian defeat of the Northern Kingdom? I also think Joel prophesied before this time and Obadiah after the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar.

6. The Kings of the minor-prophets: To properly understand the prophet you must understand their times. The best approach to achieve that purpose is to examine the king and his relationship to God in his leadership of the Nation. The minor-prophets prophesied to both the Southern (Judah) and Northern (Samaria) Kingdoms. Below is a table of the kings at the time of Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Obadiah.

Prophet	Samaria	Judah	dates	times
Hosea	Jeroboam II, Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, Hoshea	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah	755-715 BC	2 Kings 14:23-17
Joel	Jehu	Joash	830-820 BC	2 Kings 11-12
Amos	Jeroboam II	Uzziah	765-755 BC	2 Kings 14:23-15:7
Obadiah	captivity	Zedekiah @ the destruction of Jerusalem	592-572 BC	2 Kings 25, 2 Chronicles 36:11-12

Questions for further discussion:

1) What kind of King was Uzziah? 2 Kings 15:1-7, 2 Chronicles 26

- 2) What kind of King was Jeroboam II? 2 Kings 14:23-29
- 3) Compare the # of Kings in Samaria to that of Judah in the table. Can we draw any conclusions about the political stability of the Northern Kingdom (Samaria)?
- 4) Should we call Hosea a minor-prophet or simply a prophet?
- 5) List some indicators of the times that Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Obadiah prophesied in that are important to understand about their mission from God?
- 6) What divided the two kingdoms? 1 Kings 12
- 7) What was the sin of Jeroboam? 1 Kings 12:25-33

As you examine the times of the minor-prophets do you believe that what the Lord says in Proverbs 14:34 applies to America too?

Minor Prophets - Hosea

Read Hosea 1-3 2 Kings 14:23-17:41

Lesson Purpose: To understand the background of Hosea and his call to the ministry as a prophet of God to the Northern Kingdom. Hosea was called out to lead in his own life as a symbol God's relationship with a rebellious Israel. We need to consider the state of deterioration and decadence of God's people and of the nation of Israel. How Hosea responded to God and challenged his own people is a testimony to God's faithfulness, mercy, and justice. My favorite most powerful verses are Hosea 4:6 and 6:6.

Review of the Reading

- 1) What were the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat the first ruler of the Northern Kingdom? 1 Kings 12:25-33
- 2) How would you characterize the times of Hosea in the Northern Kingdom? 2 Kings 14:23-17:41
- 3) Why would a people of God be so attracted to the worship of Canaanite gods?
- 4) What were the practices of the Northern Kingdom as Hosea prophesied to them? 2 Kings 17

- 5) What did God tell Hosea to do? Hosea 1:2 Why would God do this?
- 6) Name the three children born to Gomer and explain why Hosea named them as he did? Hosea 1:4-8
- 7) Even in despair, defeat, and distress God always points us to His ultimate victory. What does Hosea prophesy about in Hosea 1:10-11?
- 8) List some things that led Israel away from God and how does the same thing occur today? Hosea 2
- 9) What does it mean to acknowledge God? Hosea 2:8
- 10) Hosea mentions a message of hope that demonstrates God's mercy. What is important to you about what this says about God? Hosea 2:14-23
- 11) What did God tell Hosea to do about Gomer? Hosea 3

1. What does Gomer teach us about ourselves?

- 2. Do you think Hosea and Gomer lived happily ever after?
- 3. Can a Nation survive and thrive that turns its back on God?

Minor Prophets - Hosea

Read Hosea 4-8 2 Kings 14:23-17:41

Lesson Purpose: To recognize that there are consequences to rebelling against God. There are consequences in drifting away from the Word of God. Hosea wrote to a people who were prosperous but had used their prosperity to feed their own lusts and not honor God. As Hosea points out it always starts with a failure to acknowledge God which is always the outcome of not seeking Him. When a people do not acknowledge God then you will soon see it reflected in society. That is what Hosea is preaching to as he views the chaos, corruption, and ultimate failure of the Northern Kingdom. We can apply these same lessons today. My favorite most powerful verses are Hosea 4:6 and 6:6.

Review of the Reading

- 1) Hosea begins to charge Israel with rebellion against God. How does he start it? Hosea 4:1
- 2) Were the leaders of Israel good for the people? Hosea 4:7, 5:10
- 3) Why is knowledge of the Lord so important? Hosea 5:4
- 4) What was Baal worship all about? Hosea 4:8-19.

- 5) It is very important to God on who we seek help from in a time of trouble. What does Hosea mean when he says "when they go with their flocks and herds to seek the Lord they will not find him"? Hosea 5:6
- 6) What does God want from Israel? Hosea 6:6
- 7) What was Israelite society like because they had turned their back on God? Hosea 6:6-10, 7:1-7
- 8) The outcome of Israel's unfaithfulness is pictured by Hosea in different ways. How would you describe Israel as a: Hosea 7:7-16
- Flat cake not turned over.
- Like a dove
- > Faulty bow
- 9) What does Hosea mean that they sow to the wind and reap the whirlwind? Hosea 8:7
- 10) Where was Israel's protection where was their trust? 8:9-10, 14

1. What is it to know the Lord?

2. What were the political conditions during the ministry of Hosea?

3. What was the appeal of Baal worship to Israel?

4. Is the doom that Hosea threatens an inevitable one?

Minor Prophets - Hosea

Read Hosea 9-14 2 Kings 14:23-17:41

Lesson Purpose: To recognize that God is merciful and awaits our repentance. Help us to understand that God has a plan to call all men back to Himself. To see references to the Messiah in Hosea who is the person through which this deliverance will come. Sin has devastating consequences in our life, however, as with Israel God's love always provides a way of escape IF we will choose the Lord! Let's learn to apply these same lessons to our lives today. My favorite most powerful verses are Hosea 4:6 and 6:6.

Review of the Reading

- 1) How are men of God treated by those in rebellion to God? Hosea 9:7-8. Is this true in any age?
- 2) What is the result of not obeying God for the Israelites? Hosea 9:17
- 3) Hosea uses the term spreading vine in Hosea 10:1-2 to make an important point. What is it?
- 4) Hosea compares righteousness and wickedness in Hosea 10: 12-13. What are some of the fundamental differences

between the wicked and the righteous from this comparison?

- 5) Why is Hosea 11:1 considered a Messianic passage?
- 6) God loves Israel even in their rebellion He offers hope through Hosea if they will return. Hosea 11:8-11. What does this tell us about our God?
- 7) What was society like? Hosea 12:7-8, 13:1-2. What does God really desire from His people? Hosea 12:6, 13:4
- 8) The fall of Samaria or the Northern Kingdom to Assyria was particularly brutal. Why did it happen and what does it teach us? Hosea 13:16
- 9) Why is it important to return to God and ask for His help and forgiveness regardless of what we have done? Hosea 14.

Thought Questions

- 1. What lessons in Hosea do you find most applicable to the modern man?
- 2. Is it ever too late to return to the Lord?

Minor Prophets – Joel

Read Joel 1-2:28

Lesson Purpose: The book of Joel addresses an agricultural phenomenon of a locust plague like none before on the land of Judah. Joel calls the nation to repentance appealing to the recognition that this devastation was allowed by almighty God as a result of the Nation's sin. I personally think Joel is referring also in his book to the rise of the Assyrian Nation and the utter destruction it will cause in the future to include eradicating the Northern Kingdom. Joel also points us to the Day of the Lord and the outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord. Peter refers to Joel in his sermon at Pentecost to demonstrate what was happening on that day. As in all biblical prophesy Joel ends with the Lord's triumph over the nations and the blessing of God's people. Why would anyone not elect to be on the winning side on the Lord's team?? My favorite most powerful verse is Joel 2:25.

Review of the Reading

- 1) Who was Joel and what does his name mean?
- 2) How does Joel describe what the locust plague has done? Joel 1:4
- 3) How is the nation affected? Joel 1:5-12, 16-20

- 4) Given the devastation of the locust plague what does Joel call the people to do? Joel 1:13-14
- 5) What does the day of the Lord refer to in Joel 1:15, 2:1, 11?
- 6) What must it be like to be in a locust invasion? Joel 2:2-11
- 7) What does the Lord really desire from each one of us? Joel 2:12-1. How is that reflected by the Nation? Joel 2:15-17 Why is that so important? Joel 2:14
- 8) One great thought for all of us is found in Joel 2:25. What does it mean?
- 9) What is the significance of spring and autumn rains that the Lord will send? Joel 2:23

- 1. What is the cause of the calamity seen by Joel? Can we subscribe to this idea?
- 2. What is involved in repentance as seen by Joel?

3. Do you think that God can make us whole if we return to Him as Joel suggests in 2:25?

Minor Prophets – Joel

Read Joel 2:28-3:21 Acts 2:16-21

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Review of the Reading

1) What will happen on the day of the Lord in Joel 2:28-32?

2) When is the day of the Lord?

- 3) Where else have you read about that references Joel 2:32 that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved?
- 4) What will happen in the valley of Jehoshaphat? Joel 3:1-16
- 5) Who was Jehoshaphat and where is this valley? 2 Chronicles 17:1-21:3
- 6) In this great and terrible day with the nations in the valley of decision where is our refuge for this or any time? Joel 3:16
- 7) What is the final outcome of this earthly turmoil in Joel's eyes? Joel 3:17-21
- 8) How should we interpret Joel 3:19 in today's age?

1. Is the day of the Lord a day within history or is it the terminus of history?

- 2. Why would Joel be called the prophet of the Pentecost?
- 3. What is the most important lesson you take from the book of Joel?

Minor Prophets - Amos

Read Amos 1-2

Lesson Purpose: The book of Amos provides insights into the mind of God as he reaches down and puts the responsibility of the prophet on Amos who was a shepherd and fig picker from Tekoa a rural town in Judah. Amos's prophetic mission is to Israel as he speaks God's truth to power in the Northern Kingdom. Amos addresses the corruption and disintegration of Israelite society that always shows up in the mistreatment of the poor by the more well to do in society. Amos also speaks to the judgment God will have on all the nations as a result of their sin. What one gets through the reading of Amos is a full picture of the character of God and his dealing with people. God is long suffering, He is merciful, but He is also just and when a people's sin is ripe He will act in the affairs of men to punish those who have turned from Him. Clearly what Amos is pointing to is the rise of the Assyrian power from the North that would devastate and deport the Northern Kingdom. I think it is interesting to see how a people will refuse to listen to the Word of God and yet feel they are protected by God. The book of Amos ends with a message of hope for a better future time when the Lord rules. That this book could be written in the most prosperous period of the divided kingdom with seemingly secure borders points to the frailty of men and his institutions and our recognition that we must lean on the Lord. My favorite most powerful passage in Amos is 8:11-12.

Review of the Reading

1) Who was Amos? Amos 1:1, 7:14

- 2) Who were the Kings of Judah and Israel? Amos 1:1
- 3) What were the conditions in Judah under King Uzziah? 2 Chronicles 26
- 4) What were the conditions in Israel under King Jeroboam II? 2 Kings 14:23-28
- 5) As you read chapter 1 of Amos what is the message to those nations who continue to sin against the Lord?
- 6) What will happen to Judah in the future as a result of their sin? Amos 2:4-5 When did this happen?
- 7) As Amos pronounces judgment on Israel what are some of the particulars for it? Amos 2:6-12
- 8) Amos makes reference to that day of destruction in Amos 2:13-15. What does this prophecy seem to be pointing to?

1. How similar are the sins of Israel in Amos's day to the sins of our own day?

2. How do you think Amos's prophetic ministry was influenced by the fact that he was a common man who was a shepherd and a fig picker?

Minor Prophets - Amos

Read Amos 3-6

Lesson Purpose: The book of Amos provides insights into the mind of God as he reaches down and puts the responsibility of the prophet on Amos who was a shepherd and fig picker from Tekoa a rural town in Judah. Amos's prophetic mission is to Israel as he speaks God's truth to power in the Northern Kingdom. Amos addresses the corruption and disintegration of Israelite society that always shows up in the mistreatment of the poor by the more well to do in society. Amos also speaks to the judgment God will have on all the nations as a result of their sin. What one gets through the reading of Amos is a full picture of the character of God and his dealing with people. God is long suffering, He is merciful, but He is also just and when a people's sin is ripe He will act in the affairs of men to punish those who have turned from Him. Clearly what Amos is pointing to is the rise of the Assyrian power from the North that would devastate and deport the Northern Kingdom. I think it is interesting to see how a people will refuse to listen to the Word of God and yet feel they are protected by God. The book of Amos ends with a message of hope for a better future time when the Lord rules. That this book could be written in the most prosperous period of the divided kingdom with seemingly secure borders points to the frailty of men and his institutions and our recognition that we must lean on the Lord. My favorite most powerful passage in Amos is 8:11-12.

Review of the Reading

1) What point was God making through Amos in Amos 3:2-8?

- 2) Did being God's people insulate Israel from the consequences of their sin? Amos 3:1-2
- 3) List some things that were going on in the Northern Kingdom at the time of Amos? Amos 3:9-15
- 4) What kind of defeat was this enemy going to deliver to Israel? Amos 3:11-12
- 5) What was at Bethel and Gilgal that attracted the people to sin before the Lord? Amos 4:4-5
- 6) What were some of the things the Lord sent to Israel to wake them up? Amos 4:6-1. What did God finally tell them? Amos 4:12
- 7) What does Amos say that God wants from them? Amos 5:4-6, 14-15. Is that too hard?
- 8) Why would Israel feel so complacent when a cataclysm is approaching? Amos 6:1-7
- 9) What is the root cause of Israel's problem with God? Amos 6:8 Why is this so bad even today?

- 1. Are there parallels to be seen between the position occupied by Israel and the position occupied by the Church?
- 2. What does Amos have to teach us about the relationship of privilege and responsibility?
- 3. Do you think had Israel repented that God would have spared the Nation?

Minor Prophets - Amos

Read Amos 7-9

Lesson Purpose: The book of Amos provides insights into the mind of God as he reaches down and puts the responsibility of the prophet on Amos who was a shepherd and fig picker from Tekoa a small rural town in Judah. Amos's prophetic mission is to Israel as he speaks God's truth to power in the Northern Kingdom. Amos addresses the corruption and disintegration of Israelite society that always shows up in the mistreatment of the poor by the more well to do in society. Amos also speaks to the judgment God will have on all the nations as a result of their sin. What one gets through the reading of Amos is a full picture of the character of God and his dealing with people. God is long suffering, He is merciful, but He is also just and when a people's sin is ripe He will act in the affairs of men to punish those who have turned from Him. Clearly what Amos is pointing to is the rise of the Assyrian power from the North that would devastate and deport the Northern Kingdom. I think it is interesting to see how a people will refuse to listen to the Word of God and yet feel they are protected by God. The book of Amos ends with a message of hope for a better future time when the Lord rules. That this book could be written in the most prosperous period of the divided kingdom with seemingly secure borders points to the frailty of men and his institutions and our recognition that we must lean on the Lord. My favorite most powerful passage is Amos 8:11-12.

Review of the Reading

1) How important is intercessory prayer in our dealings with God? Amos 7:1-6

- 2) What did the vision of the plumb line teach Amos? Amos 7: 7-9
- 3) Who was Amaziah? Amos 7:10
- 4) What was Amaziah's charge against Amos? Amos 7:10-13
- 5) Was Amos full of fear of the King? Amos 7:14-17 What was going to happen to Amaziah the priest of Bethel?
- 6) What does God use as a vision to Amos to describe the state of Israel's sin? Amos 8:1-3
- 7) How important is social justice to God? Amos 8:4-6
- 8) One of the most sobering passages of the entire Bible is found in Amos 8:11-12. What will there be a famine in the land for? Why is this so disastrous?
- 9) What happens when the sin in our lives gets to the point that God fixes His eyes upon us for evil and not for good? Amos 9:1-10
- 10) What hope does Amos offer as he closes out his book? Amos 9:11-15

- 1. Out of the book of Amos what passages do you find more appealing than others?
- 2. Is the God of Amos a God of justice or a God of mercy?
- 3. In what way were the doctrines of Amos concerning God novel for his day?

Minor Prophets - Obadiah

Read Obadiah

Lesson Purpose: The shortest book in the O.T. was written to demonstrate God's faithfulness in looking after His people. Edom was the nation from Esau and was in constant hostility to Israel or the line of Esau's brother Jacob. Edom attacked Israel on its journey to Canaan but God forbade Israel to take its territory. Throughout their history living next to one another there was always tension and hostility as we have in any day between the Lord's people and the world. I believe that Obadiah addresses the time of the fall of Jerusalem to the armies of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. and the despicable behavior of the Edomites in taking advantage of the Jewish nation during this crisis of defeat. For this the Lord promises through Obadiah that Edom will be destroyed. This prophecy states that the struggle that began in the womb of Rachel is concluded by God on His terms in favor of His people. My favorite most powerful passage is Obadiah 3.

Review of the Reading

- 1) What other passages of scripture refer to the prophet Obadiah? What does his name mean?
- 2) What kind of territory did Edom live in? Obadiah 3-4, 8, 19, 21
- 3) What was the cause of Edom's problem? Obadiah 3

- 4) What does God promise to happen to Edom? Obadiah 4-10,18
- 5) Why does God find such fault with Edom...what did they do to Israel? Obadiah 11-14, Psalms 137:7
- 6) What hope does the Lord offer the Jewish people even in their distressed circumstances? Obadiah 17-21
- 7) How would you interpret verse 15?
- 8) We live in history with all its ups and downs but we know in the end of the story. What does verse 21 say about God being in control of this universe?
- 9) Is there a similarity between Obadiah 1-9 and Jeremiah 49:7-16?

- 1. Does Obadiah have anything to say about the person present at a calamity who doesn't want to get involved?
- 2. How is the spirit of vengeance displayed in Obadiah to be dealt with by the Christian?

3. What is Obadiah's outlook on the final outcome of history?

A People of the Book 8-Year Curriculum

	January - March	April - June	July - September	October - December
2007	Matthew	Genesis	Galatians & Ephesians	Isaiah
2008	Exodus	I & II Timothy, Titus	Hebrews	Minor Prophets I (Hosea-Obadiah)
2009	Mark	Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	Romans	Jeremiah & Lamentations
2010	I & II Thessalonians	Joshua, Judges, Ruth	James, I & II Peter	Minor Prophets II (Jonah-Habakkuk)
2011	Luke	Samuel, Kings, Chronicles	I, II, III John & Jude	Daniel
2012	Acts	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther	I Corinthians	Minor Prophets III (Zephaniah-Malachi)
2013	John	Job	II Corinthians	Psalms
2014	Philippians, Colossians & Philemon	Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon	Revelation	Ezekiel

Summit Church of Christ 6015 Alexandria Pike Cold Spring, KY 41076 (859) 635-1141 www.summitchurchofchrist.org