



12-WEEK BIBLE STUDY SERIES

MINOR PROPHETS

SMALL IN SIZE BUT MIGHTY IN MESSAGE.

BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 9, 2026

EVERY
WEDNESDAY

7PM



zoom



LIVE

ID: 538 095 5668

PASSCODE: 1001



REV. DIANNE TAM
CED COORDINATOR

Minor Prophets

Small in Size, Mighty in Message
A 12-Week Journey Through the Minor
Prophets



Introduction

Small in Size, Mighty in Message is a 12-week Bible study journey through the twelve Minor Prophets—Hosea through Malachi. Although these prophetic books are called “minor” because of their shorter length, their messages are anything but minor. Together, they reveal God's holiness, justice, mercy, faithfulness, and unwavering desire to restore His people.

Throughout the series, participants will explore the historical setting and central message of each prophet while discovering how these ancient words continue to speak powerfully to believers today.

The study will examine recurring themes such as spiritual unfaithfulness, idolatry, injustice, pride, repentance, judgment, restoration, faithful living, and hope.

Each week will introduce the prophet, explain the historical context, examine key passages and major themes, identify connections to Christ and the New Testament, and provide practical applications for Christian living. Participants will also see how the twelve books fit within the larger biblical story—from Israel's divided kingdom and the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions, through exile and restoration, to Malachi's anticipation of the coming Messiah.

The books may be minor in length, but their message about God and His relationship with His people is mighty.



Syllabus

- Week 1 (9/9): Hosea — wedding ring or broken/restored heart
- Week 2 (9/16): Joel — locusts
- Week 3 (9/23): Amos — scales of justice
- Week 4 (9/30): Obadiah — mountain/cliff representing Edom and pride
- Week 5 (10/7): Jonah — sea/great fish
- Week 6 (10/14): Micah — scales/justice
- 10/21: **KAHOOT TIME! What did you remember?**
- Week 7 (10/28): Nahum — Nineveh/ancient city
- Week 8 (11/4): Habakkuk — watchtower
- Week 9 (11/11): Zephaniah — trumpet or approaching day
- Week 10 (11/18): Haggai — rebuilding the Temple
- Week 11 (11/25): Zechariah — lampstand/visions
- Week 12 (12/2): Malachi — messenger or sunrise
- 12/9: **KAHOOT TIME! What did you remember?**

Book Resources

1. The Holy Bible
2. Mark J. Boda — The Message of the Twelve: Hearing the Voice of the Minor Prophets
3. T. Desmond Alexander & David W. Baker, eds. — Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets
4. Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart — How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth
5. Andrew E. Hill & John H. Walton — A Survey of the Old Testament
6. Tremper Longman III — Old Testament Commentary Survey



Why Were They called Minor Prophets?

They are called the Minor Prophets because their books are shorter, not because the prophets themselves—or their messages—were less important.

The Old Testament prophetic books are traditionally grouped into two categories:

- Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. These books are generally much longer.
- Minor Prophets: Hosea through Malachi—the final 12 books of the Old Testament. These writings are considerably shorter.

The word “minor” refers to length, not significance.

For example, Obadiah has only 21 verses, while Isaiah has 66 chapters. Yet Obadiah's message concerning pride, judgment, justice, and God's sovereignty is still significant.

Why are the 12 grouped together?

In the Hebrew tradition, these twelve prophetic books were collected together as a single collection often called “The Twelve.” Because the individual books were short, placing them together on one scroll also helped preserve them as a collection.

Each prophet may have given us a relatively short book, but each carries a powerful message from God concerning sin, justice, repentance, judgment, mercy, restoration, hope, and the coming Messiah.



Where in History do the Minor Prophets Fit?

Understanding when the prophets spoke helps us understand why they spoke.

The Minor Prophets ministered across several major periods of Israel's history:

1. Divided Kingdom

Israel divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and Southern Kingdom (Judah).

2. Assyrian Crisis

The Northern Kingdom fell to Assyria in 722 BC.

3. Babylonian Crisis & Exile

Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by Babylon in 586 BC.

4. Return & Restoration

Jewish exiles began returning under Persian rule in 538/537 BC.

Divided Kingdom → Assyria → Babylon → Exile → Return → Restoration

Bottom takeaway:

The prophets didn't speak in a vacuum. God sent His messengers into real historical circumstances with a specific word for His people.

Where in History do the Minor Prophets Fit?

Before the Exile: Warning Is Coming		
Prophet	Approx. Period	Primary Setting
Jonah	c. 790–750 BC	Sent to Nineveh
Amos	c. 760–750 BC	Northern Kingdom
Hosea	c. 755–715 BC	Northern Kingdom
Micah	c. 735–700 BC	Judah
Nahum	c. 660–630 BC	Judgment against Nineveh
Zephaniah	c. 640–609 BC	Judah
Habakkuk	c. 609–597 BC	Judah/Babylonian threat

The Pre-Exilic Prophets
Theme:
“Return to God before
judgment comes.”

Major Turning Point
722 BC — Assyria conquers the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Bottom takeaway:
God repeatedly warned His people before judgment came.

Where in History do the Minor Prophets Fit?

From Judgment to Restoration

722 BC

Israel falls to Assyria



586 BC

Jerusalem falls to Babylon

Temple destroyed • Judah exiled



539 BC

Persia conquers Babylon



538/537 BC

Jewish exiles begin returning to Jerusalem



520 BC

Haggai & Zechariah minister



516 BC

Second Temple completed



c. 450–430 BC

Malachi ministers

Obadiah

Often associated with Jerusalem's destruction, although **its precise date is debated**.

Bottom takeaway:

Judgment was not the end of Israel's story. God preserved His people and brought them home.

Judgment → Exile → Return → Restoration

Where in History do the Minor Prophets Fit?



After the Exile: Rebuild & Prepare

Title:
The Post-Exilic Prophets

Theme:
“You've returned—now return to God with your whole heart.”

Haggai — 520 BC
Message: Put God first and rebuild His house.

Zechariah — 520 BC onward
Message: God has not forgotten His people. Restoration is coming, and God's purposes will be accomplished by His Spirit.

Malachi — c. 450–430 BC
Message: Return to faithful worship and covenant living while awaiting God's coming messenger and Messiah.
Then add a separate box:

What About Joel?

Joel's date is uncertain. Scholars have proposed both pre-exilic and post-exilic dates. Rather than forcing Joel into a specific period, acknowledge the uncertainty while emphasizing his clear message:
Repentance • Day of the LORD • Restoration • Promise of the Spirit

MALACHI → WAITING → MESSIAH → NEW TESTAMENT

The Minor Prophets end with God's people waiting—but God's redemptive story isn't over.



Week 1: Hosea

A Love That Won't Let Go

Big Idea: *God's faithful love pursues an unfaithful people.*

Key Scripture: Hosea 3:1

Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.

Bottom statement:

We may wander from God, but His faithful love continues calling us home.



Week 1: Hosea

Meet the Hosea the Prophet

Name: Hosea — related to the idea of **salvation/deliverance**

Ministry: Approximately 8th century BC

Audience: Primarily the **Northern Kingdom of Israel**

Contemporary prophets: Isaiah, Amos, and Micah

Historical setting: Hosea ministered during Israel's final decades before the nation fell to **Assyria in 722 BC.**

What's unusual about Hosea?

God didn't merely give Hosea a message to **preach**.

God called Hosea to **live the message** through his marriage.

Teaching statement:

Hosea's life became a living illustration of God's relationship with Israel.

Week 1: Hosea

Historical Setting

What Was Happening in Israel?

Prosperity → Spiritual Decline → Assyrian Threat → 722 BC: Israel Falls

During Hosea's ministry:

Israel experienced periods of **economic prosperity**.

The nation was filled with **idolatry and spiritual compromise**.

Israel frequently trusted **political alliances** rather than God.

The people continued religious practices while their hearts wandered from God.

Assyria was becoming the dominant regional power.

Key Lesson

Outward prosperity does not necessarily indicate inward spiritual health.

Canva visual: Put a small map showing Israel — Judah — Assyria beside the timeline.



Week 1: Hosea

Hosea & Gomer: A Living Message

Hosea 1:2–3

² When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, “Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the LORD.” ³ So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

God commands Hosea to marry **Gomer**.

Their marriage becomes a prophetic picture:

Hosea	Gomer
Faithfulness	Unfaithfulness
Covenant commitment	Wandering
Pursuing love	Pursuing other lovers

The Bigger Picture

Hosea → illustrates God's covenant faithfulness

Gomer → illustrates Israel's spiritual unfaithfulness

Israel belonged to God but repeatedly pursued other gods.

Key Truth

Israel's sin wasn't merely rule-breaking. It was relationship-breaking.

This is where I would explain the biblical concept of **spiritual adultery**.

Week 1: Hosea

What Were Israel's “Other Lovers”?

The Problem: A Divided Heart

Read: Hosea 2:5, 8, 13

5 Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. She said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my olive oil and my drink.’

8 She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold—which they used for Baal.

13 I will punish her for the day she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot,” declares the LORD.



Week 1: Hosea

Who Are Gomer's “Lovers” Today?

Money • Career • Relationships • Success • Approval • Status • Pleasure • Possessions • Influence • Self

Then put your discussion question prominently:

**What am I asking to give me what I should ultimately be receiving from God?
Security? Identity? Worth? Satisfaction? Hope?**

This could be one of the strongest discussion slides of the lesson.



Week 1: Hosea

God's Love Does Not Ignore Sin

Love & Discipline

Read: Hosea 2:6–7; 4:1–2

⁶Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes;
I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way.

⁷She will chase after her lovers but not catch them;
she will look for them but not find them.

Then she will say,

‘I will go back to my husband as at first,
for then I was better off than now.’

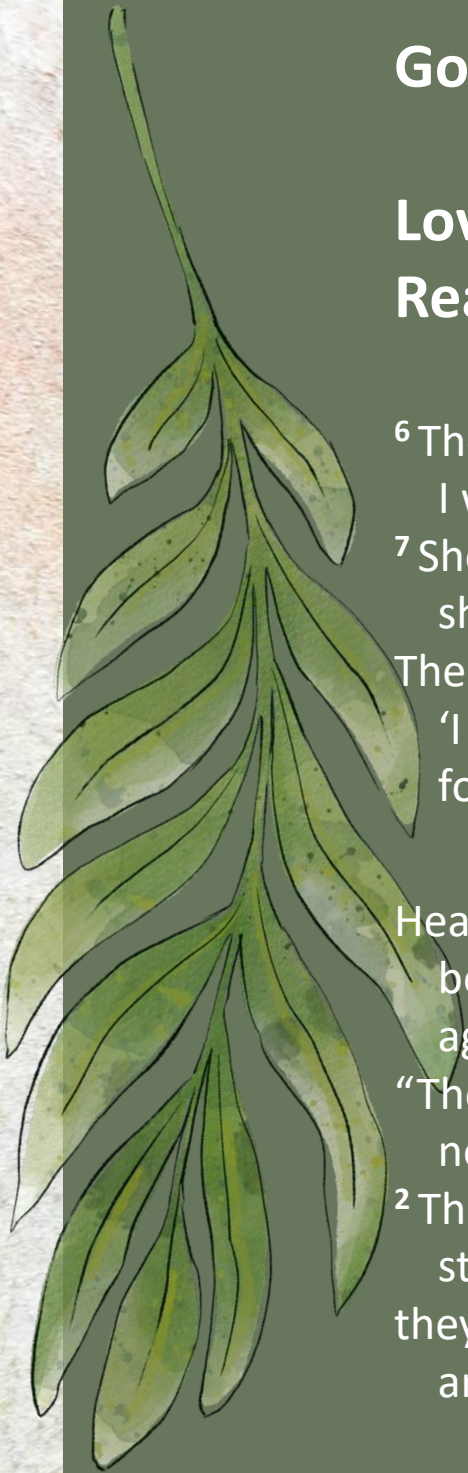
Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites,
because the LORD has a charge to bring
against you who live in the land:

“There is no faithfulness, no love,
no acknowledgment of God in the land.

²There is only cursing,^[a] lying and murder,
stealing and adultery;

they break all bounds,

and bloodshed follows bloodshed.



Week 1: Hosea

God's Love Does Not Ignore Sin

Love & Discipline

God loves Israel, but He doesn't overlook Israel's rebellion.
Hosea teaches us that:

God is loving.

God is holy.

God is just.

These characteristics don't contradict one another.

Important Principle

God's discipline doesn't mean He has stopped loving His people. His correction demonstrates that their relationship with Him matters.

Hosea's repeated pattern here:

Sin → Warning → Consequences → Repentance → Restoration



Week 1: Hosea

“Go Again and Love”

The Heart of Hosea

Hosea 3:1–3

Hosea’s Reconciliation With His Wife

3 The LORD said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”

² So I bought her for fifteen shekels^[a] of silver and about a homer and a lethek^[b] of barley. ³ Then I told her, “You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you.”

GO AGAIN.

After betrayal.

After wandering.

After disappointment.

After unfaithfulness.

God tells Hosea to love again.

Hosea then pays a price to reclaim Gomer.

Redemption

To redeem: *to recover, reclaim, or buy back at a price.*

The most remarkable part of Hosea's story isn't simply that Gomer wandered. It's that Hosea went after her.

And spiritually:

Don't just look at how Gomer wandered. Look at how God loves.

Week 1: Hosea

Hosea Points Us Toward Christ

From Hosea to Jesus

Hosea isn't merely an Old Testament story disconnected from the gospel.

Hosea 11:1 → Matthew 2:15

“Out of Egypt have I called my son.”

Matthew applies Hosea's words in connection with Jesus.

Hosea 6:6 → Matthew 9:13

“I desired mercy, and not sacrifice.”

Jesus quotes Hosea when confronting empty religion.

Hosea 1–2 → Romans 9:25–26

Paul uses Hosea's language concerning God's people and mercy.

Here is the redemption connection:

Hosea paid a price to reclaim Gomer.

Jesus paid the ultimate price for our redemption.

Supporting Scripture: 1 Peter 1:18–19

¹⁸ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Key Truth

Hosea gives us a picture of pursuing love; Jesus reveals the fullness of God's redeeming love.



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Week 1: Hosea

**God's Invitation: Return
God Wants His People Back**
Read: Hosea 14:1–4

Repentance to Bring Blessing

14 ^[a]Return, Israel, to the LORD your God.

Your sins have been your downfall!

²Take words with you
and return to the LORD.

Say to him:

“Forgive all our sins
and receive us graciously,
that we may offer the fruit of our lips.”^[b]

³Assyria cannot save us;
we will not mount warhorses.

We will never again say ‘Our gods’
to what our own hands have made,
for in you the fatherless find compassion.”

⁴“I will heal their waywardness
and love them freely,
for my anger has turned away from them.



Week 1: Hosea



God's Invitation: Return
God Wants His People Back
Hosea 14:1–4

This is where Hosea ultimately leads.

RETURN

Then:
You wandered — **Return.**
You compromised — **Return.**
You trusted other things — **Return.**
You failed — **Return.**

Hosea 14:4
God promises:
“**I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely...**” — KJV

Application

God's purpose isn't simply to **expose** His people's sin.
His desire is to **restore** His people to relationship with Himself.
Repentance isn't merely turning away from something. It is returning to Someone.

Week 1: Hosea

What Does Hosea Say to Us?

Bringing Hosea Home

Ask Yourself:

1. What is competing with God for my heart?
2. Where am I looking for security, identity, or satisfaction apart from God?
3. Have I mistaken God's blessings for God's approval?
4. Is there an area where God is calling me to return?
5. How should God's pursuing love affect the way I extend grace to others?

Week 1 takeaway:

BIG IDEA

We may wander from God, but God's faithful love continues calling us home.

Closing Prayer Focus:

Lord, reveal anything competing for our hearts, lead us to genuine repentance, and help us rest in Your faithful, redeeming love.



What Does Hosea Say to Us?

Bringing Hosea Home

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After studying Hosea, which surprises you more—how far people can wander from God, or how far God is willing to go to bring His people back? Why?

That brings the discussion back to the central message of your lesson. **Hosea isn't ultimately a story about how bad Gomer was; it's a revelation of how faithful God is.**

Week 1 takeaway:

BIG IDEA

We may wander from God, but God's faithful love continues calling us home.

Closing Prayer Focus:

Lord, reveal anything competing for our hearts, lead us to genuine repentance, and help us rest in Your faithful, redeeming love.



Be Blessed!

Presented By Rev. Dianne Tam