

# BETWEEN THE LINES™

## DEEPER LOOK STUDY GUIDE

## THE MINOR PROPHETS • 12 Courageous Spokesmen

**T**hree of the minor prophets (**Jonah, Nahum, and Zephaniah**) clearly condemn the dominance and cruelty of Assyria. Let's learn a little more about this most brutal nation of antiquity and see why the Lord was so serious in His condemnations of this nation.

- Assyria is known as early as **Genesis 10**.
- This nation was first settled by Babylonian immigrants that came from the north.
- Assyria was centered on two rivers (Tigris and Khoser) and a man-made canal.
- Assyrians most commonly honored their major deity, Assher, but they had a large pantheon beyond that which was generally mutually shared with Babylon.
- The major city (and capitol) was Nineveh.
- Other Assyrian towns of note were Calah and Ashur.
- The geography of Assyria allowed for wheat and barley in the plains and grapes, olives, cherries, apricots, and other fruit in the hill region.
- Assyrian kings enjoyed drinking from goblets shaped like animals' heads.
- A number of Assyrian kings enter into various Bible stories... Shalmaneser III, Tiglath-pileser III (Pul), Shalmaneser V, Sargon II, Sennacherib, and to a lesser degree Shamsi-Adad V and Adadnirari III.
- Several Assyrian kings worked at building up a major repository (library) of multiplied thousands of clay tablets.
- They were noted for iron weaponry, brutal sieges, and cruelty to the conquered as they sought to break the spirit of their enemies by horrific atrocities.
  - ▶ Impaling enemy soldiers in view of their families was a favorite tactic.
  - ▶ Another Assyrian favorite was to skin the captured alive.
  - ▶ The Lord intended to turn one of their own tactics back on them... the old ring in the lips or the nose trick. (See **II Kings 19**)
- Assyria/Nineveh came to the exact end that Nahum prophesied in August of 612 b.c.

### Elijah in the New Testament

The sense of Elijah was prominent in the Gospel era mentality. You would do well to spend some time chewing on some of those passages. Here are some I'd suggest...

- Matthew 17, Mark 9, and Luke 9** • He is present at the Transfiguration event.
- Matthew 11** • John the Baptist is compared to this dominant Old Testament figure.
- Matthew 16** • Some believed that Jesus might be Elijah.
- Matthew 27** • A misunderstanding at the cross assumes Jesus is crying for Elijah.
- John 1** • Some challenge John as to his identity, thinking he really might be Elijah.
- Romans 11** • Paul harkens back to the powerful intercession of Elijah for the people.
- James 5** • James encourages us by the power of one as frail as Elijah, yet effective.

### Conclusion

It appears that one simple prophecy (**Malachi 4**) really made an impact on the mentality of those who yearned for Messiah. This is still true to many observant Jews to this day. There is an aching for Elijah for if he were to appear could Messiah the Prince be far behind?

## Comparison Chart Of The Minor Prophets

<u>Name/s</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Dating</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>Relatives</u>	<u>Contemporary Kings</u>
<b>Joel</b>	<i>Jab is God</i> ▶ Warned of devastation but gave hope for blessings to come... ▶ <b>A Message of Hope: Joel 3: 18~21</b> • "Other nations may crumble but I will bless Judah forever."	9th c. bce	? in Judah	Pethuel — <i>Father</i>	Joash
<b>Jonah</b>	<i>dove</i> ▶ Sent to warn Nineveh of God's impending judgments... ▶ <b>A Message of Hope: Jonah 4</b> • "If God should have pity on a gourd, how much more valuable is a nation?"	9th c. bce	Gath-hepher	Amittai — <i>Father</i>	Jereboam II?
<b>Obadiah</b>	<i>Lord's servant</i> ▶ Prophesied against Edom for their attack against Judah at the time of the Babylonian invasion... ▶ <b>A Message of Hope: Obadiah 1:17</b> • "Upon Mount Zion will be deliverance and holiness, and the house of Jacob will be blessed."	Debated	?	?	Debated
<b>Amos</b>	<i>burden</i> ▶ Condemned Israel's enemies, but also rebuked Israel for her sins and insensitivity to the poor... ▶ <b>A Message of Hope: Amos 9:15</b> • "I can't help Myself. I love Israel and I will plant my people in their land again."	9th~8th c. bce	Tekoa	?	Uzziah, Jereboam II, Shallum
<b>Hosea</b>	<i>salvation</i> ▶ Israel is chastised for aligning themselves to foreign powers rather than being faithful to God... ▶ <b>A Message of Hope: Joel 14:4</b> • "I will heal and restore you. My love will triumph over my anger."	8th c. bce	?	Beeri — <i>Father</i>	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah
<b>Micah</b>	<i>who is like God?</i> ▶ The people are warned of the coming invasions of both Assyria and Babylon... ▶ <b>A Message of Hope: Micah 7:18/19</b> • "Where else will you find a God as gracious as this? His compassion will overwhelm us!"	8th~7th c. bce	Moresheth	?	Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh
<b>Nahum</b>	<i>consolation</i> ▶ Predicted the destruction of Nineveh because of Assyria's cruel treatment of other nations... ▶ <b>A Message of Hope: None. Nahum 3:19</b> • "There is no healing of your bruise!"	7th c. bce	Elkosh?	?	Josiah
<b>Zephaniah</b>	<i>hidden by Jab</i> ▶ Condemned the worship of false gods, predicted the destruction and restoration of Jerusalem and the disasters of other nations... ▶ <b>A Message of Hope: Zephaniah 3:14~20</b> • "When God gets done with you He will rejoice over you with singing!"	7th c. bce	Jerusalem?	Cushi — <i>Father</i>	Josiah
<b>Habakkuk</b>	<i>embrace</i> ▶ This prophet questions how God could allow someone as cruel as Babylon to defeat Jerusalem... ▶ <b>A Message of Hope: Habakkuk 3:18/19</b> • "In spite of it all I will hope in Him by rejoicing praising this good God."	7th c. bce	?	?	Josiah
<b>Zechariah</b>	<i>Jab remembers</i> ▶ Predicted the return to the homeland and saw the day when nations would flow to Jerusalem to worship God... ▶ <b>A Message of Hope: A number of Messianic prophecies, i.e. Zechariah 5:12/13, 9:9, 11:12, 13:1, 13:6, 14:4</b>	6th c. bce	Babylon?	Berechiah — <i>Father</i> Iddo — <i>Grandfather</i>	None
<b>Haggai</b>	<i>Festive</i> ▶ Urged the people to put the rebuilding of the temple before their own interests... ▶ <b>A Message of Hope: Haggai 2:9</b> • "The glory of this temple will be greater than Solomon's because Messiah will walk here!"	6th c. bce	Jerusalem	?	None
<b>Malachi</b>	<i>My messenger</i> ▶ Reminded the people of God's demands and of the promise of Messiah to come... ▶ <b>A Message of Hope: Malachi 4:5/6</b> • "Elijah will come to unify you just before Messiah the Prince arrives."	?	?	?	?